

THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST

OCTOBER, 1939

Volume II

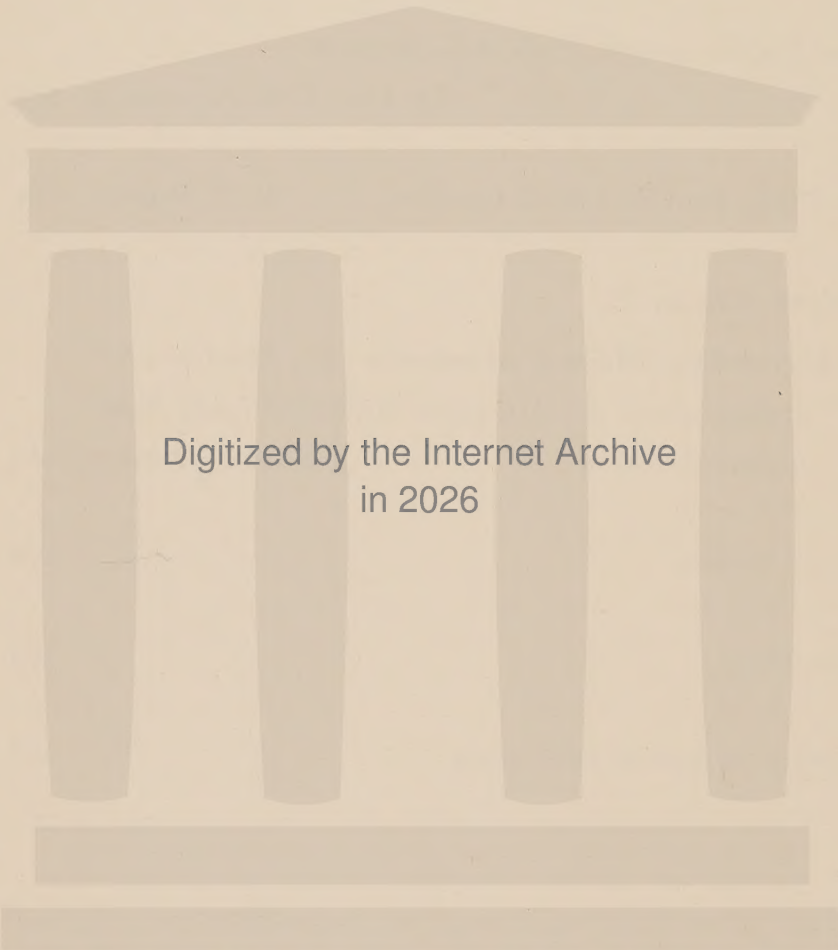
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THE ARCHIVIST IN AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP¹

THE plain record of archival activity and development in the United States during the past few years indicates clearly that archival interests have been nationalized and professionalized. The new profession of archives has taken its place beside law, medicine, theology, history, political science, and other older arts in the pattern of American life. Like the lawyer, doctor, and historian, the archivist professes that he has the requisite special knowledge, mastery, and inclination for devoting his time and energy to the service of others by practicing his chosen art for considerations not wholly or primarily commercial. The archivist's conception of his true professional function and rôle has a vital relationship to the service, development, and prestige of his profession. Since it has provoked inadequate discussion and even disagreement, the professional rôle of the archivist in American culture merits careful examination and evaluation.

There is a tendency in some quarters of the United States and Europe to view the archivist as a technician with narrow, restricted, and rather negative functions. The defense of archives in his custody from physical dangers and improper administrative procedures is regarded as the primary duty of the archivist. In the doubtful though possible event that the primary task of preservation does not require all of his time, he may concern himself intermittently with the secondary duty of serving the special needs of researchers. But he should regard this function, in which he is inexpert, as distinctly secondary in importance and as tending to make of him a servant of the public rather than of his archives.

Some of the restrictionists make a rather sharp division of archival responsibility among administrators, archivists, users, and politicians.

¹ Presidential address read at the third annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Annapolis, Maryland, October 13, 1939.

They hold that the administrator has the duty and responsibility of making the archives, preserving them while they are in the office of origin, solving the problem of bulk by destroying documents on the basis of the practical business needs of the office, and determining the time and extent of transfer to the archivist. The administrator alone is represented as the proper agent of destruction; for both the archivist and the historian, from the very nature of their positions and their ignorance of the unpredictable scholarly interests of the future, are incapable of appraising the administrative and historical value of archives, and the historian is further disqualified by his liability to prejudice where his own scholarly interests are involved. The restrictionists consider that the true function of the archivist is to receive the archives from administrators, preserve them, and, if there is time, render minor services to researchers. His chief interest is in the records as archives rather than as documents valuable for history and other fields of knowledge. Such questions as publication, centralization or decentralization, public appropriations, and the date at which modern archives are properly made available to the public are the responsibility of politicians and users.

It is sometimes contended that the archivist, though he needs some knowledge of history and may properly have a personal interest in it and other branches of learning, is not and should not be a historian. A deep interest in a particular field of knowledge creates a prepossession for that field which may make of the archivist an inappropriate, partial, or even dangerous custodian.

In the light of actual conditions in the United States, is this view of restricted archival function and compartmentalized responsibility realistic, wise, and adequate; and does it afford sufficient freedom for the development of the archival profession?

Public archives, created by administrators in the discharge of their official duties, are at first of primary use and importance as administrative or business records essential to the conduct of the public office. Some quickly lose their value as business records; most lose it in a few years; some retain it for a long time or indefinitely. As archives become useless as business records, the busy administrator tends to regard them as valueless. Though created as business records for the use of government and not as historical records for the use of posterity, public archives actually possess historical value from the moment of their creation. Passing time brings a shift in value for most of them. As they decline in value and approach or attain useless-

ness as business records, they increase in value and approach or attain exclusive importance as historical records.

The existing body of current and noncurrent archives constitutes the largest and most valuable mass of significant information on the record of human achievement. It contributes mightily to the various fields of knowledge, particularly the social sciences, and facilitates the writing of thousands of books for the use of scholars, teachers, students, and citizens. Public archives are the repository of information capable of enriching the general education, the specialized knowledge, the historical consciousness, and the culture of the nation and its regions, states, and localities. The archives of the future will possess even greater historical value because they will record an ever expanding segment of human achievement as public activities expand in response to the democratic concept of government as the common agent for solving the ever growing number of common problems which emerge from an ever increasingly complex social organism.

In the American system of decentralized administration, is it prudent or practicable to entrust the fate of valuable public archives to thousands of public officials who are, in many instances, political in character, unversed in scholarship, unappreciative of the historical value of archives, uncertain but brief in their tenure of office, and comparatively inexperienced in the art of making and preserving records? Can these administrators be trusted to select durable paper and ink and writing devices? To introduce and administer any system for the effective selection and destruction of records? To preserve noncurrent as well as current records? To determine the proper time and extent of transfer to the archivist? The realist cannot answer these questions affirmatively.

What manner of person is the archivist who rules over the princely domain of noncurrent public archives and whose professional function is under examination? Some careful students of the factors of competence in archival administration consider that the archivist in responsible direction of any major American municipal, state, or federal archival agency should have a broad general collegiate education with specialization in the social sciences, particularly American history and government, and a good equipment in modern foreign languages. This training should be supplemented by graduate work leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in American history with extensive research use of public archives, by some study of archival history and practices and the elements of library science, and

by an apprenticeship in an archival establishment. Even archivists in charge of minor agencies should have two years of graduate work in the social sciences and in archival history and practices. Though all American archivists do not now possess these qualifications, the professional standards have been set, are winning recognition, and will be applied increasingly in replacements. No respectable archival establishment can long disregard these professional standards. They will insure an archival personnel whose training and ability compare favorably with that of the best in American professional life.

Far from impairing the archivist's fitness, thorough graduate training in history, as broadly conceived by modern historians, is a distinct asset in that it enhances his professional esprit de corps, his respect for archives, his appreciation of their importance, his determination to serve them properly and effectively, and his ability to minister to the present and future scholarly interests of social scientists who are and will be the chief users of the archives. Though the precise scholarly interests and emphases of the future may be unpredictable, it is not likely that great fields of knowledge and scholarly interest will be developed that are not now more or less within the purview of the modern social scientist. Perhaps an archivist ought not to be a historian, but a historian may well be an archivist. The historian, who becomes an archivist and thus an ex-historian, will not subordinate archival to historical interests. There is no real antagonism between sound historical scholarship and archival competency.

The well-trained archivist will be appreciative of the administrative and historical values of archives, sensible of their neglect by public officials, expert in his knowledge of the best techniques for their preservation, conversant with the needs of scholarship, and alert to all the conditions which affect archives and his success as an archivist. Will he be able to restrict his function to the preservation of archives?

Though the administrator is responsible for the making or production of archives, the American archivist cannot be unconcerned about the quality of materials and the forms used. They vitally affect his primary task of preservation. Unless administrators comply with accepted standards of durability for paper, ink, and writing devices and use compact and convenient forms, the archivist's task of preservation will be rendered more difficult. Until administrators are sufficiently interested and informed to comply with such standards, archivists must concern themselves with the enactment of

public records laws embodying those standards and with the enforcement of the laws by education, supervision, and penalties. By their activity in stimulating archival legislation, state and federal archivists and the Society of American Archivists have definitely recognized the improvement of production as a proper archival function.

The American archivist will be under pressure to become an aggressive collector rather than a passive receiver of archives. If he is content with such as survive administrative neglect and come to him by administrative whim or initiative, he is likely to discover that the archives are greatly impaired in quantity as well as in physical and moral quality. Until public officials generally of their own volition or by legal requirement regularly transfer their noncurrent records to the archivist, he must be alert to secure their transfer by persuasion and by legislation.

The major attention of the archivist will be devoted to the primary function of employing the best techniques and instrumentalities for the preservation of the archives in his custody. On no account should he neglect this basic task. But he is also concerned with the preservation of the records before they are transferred to his custody. Mere transfer works no magic transformation in the value of archives. The negligence of administrators in preserving records in their offices seriously impairs their value and complicates the work of the archivist. Therefore, in defense of the interests of self, archives, and scholarship, American archivists quite properly seek by education, legislation, and supervision to require administrators to preserve such public records as are in the offices of origin.

No one is more concerned than the archivist with the problem of bulk. The desirable goal is an adequate reduction of quantity by the destruction of archives without business or significant historical value and the preservation of a sufficient quantity of impartial records to show the important proceedings of the governmental offices and meet the needs of scholarship. The complex system of central registry is excellent and feasible for well-administered offices. It makes the administrator the sole agent for the selection of archives for permanent preservation and also for the destruction on the basis of the administrative needs of his office of a considerable portion of the records before they reach the archival stage. But the utter impossibility of the general adoption of the system in the United States makes it at present an impractical solution of the problem of bulk. Until some such system is generally and effectively applied, Ameri-

can archival conditions indicate that the administrator, instead of being the sole agent of destruction, should be forbidden by law to destroy any archives. The safest and most practical method of achieving reduction is to make destruction the joint responsibility of those most capable of appraising the business and historical value of the records—the administrator and the archivist. Selection and destruction should be based on the needs of the scholar as well as of the administrator. The well-trained archivist possesses more adequate knowledge and judgment than anyone else for evaluating non-current archives, and the archival function properly includes the important and baffling problem of reduction.

Archivists have not adequately developed the function of facilitating the extensive use of archives. To researchers they sometimes appear as antiquarians hoarding their precious records, protecting them from exploitation, or even resenting their extensive use. Most noncurrent records in archival custody are valuable only as historical records. But are they actually valuable unless and until they are used by researchers? Can the archivist's work in production, collection, and preservation attain fruition until the archives are used? On what stronger ground than the utility of archives can the archivist justify his professional existence and his claim for public support? If there is an important relation between value and use, the archivist will give to his archives the maximum of availability to historians, economists, sociologists, political scientists, statisticians, and other investigators, consistent with the requirements of preservation.

Realizing that most researchers have little time or aptitude for hunting hidden collections, the archivist will apprise them of the location, extent, and nature of the archives in his custody. When researchers come to the agency, they will receive courteous and intelligent service and descriptive lists and other convenient aids for the effective use of the records. Not content with serving visiting researchers, the archivist will seek to take his archives to the world of scholarship by various methods of publication—printing, near-printing, and microphotography. The vast quantity of valuable archives, the high cost of printing, and the small number of copies of archival publications needed by libraries and scholars open great possibilities to microphotography as a means of publication. The archivist can enrich American library resources and scholarship by establishing a regular service of supplying to libraries and individuals at cost microfilm copies of important collections or categories of

archives made from master films prepared and retained by the agency. The cost of the master films would be inconsequential in comparison with any other form of publication; the cost of the copies would be within the reach of libraries or even individuals; the service would be adequate to the needs of scholarship; and vastly more archives would be made widely available than could conceivably be the case by any other form of publication.

As public officials in a democratic country, American archivists might well devote some attention to the stimulation of wider use of archives by teachers, students, and citizens and to the establishment of reference and informational service for the public as well as for governmental offices. Greater use and appreciation of archives by the public would contribute to general education and insure more liberal public support for the entire range of archival work. There is no real antagonism between the archivist's service to his archives and to the public.

By increasing the availability and use of archives, the archivist extends and enriches his services to archives and the public, makes himself more culturally dynamic and significant, and contributes to the development of the archival profession as an indispensable publicly supported agent of American scholarship and culture.

The function of the American archivist is affected by the fact that he is in his own right a public administrative official. As such, he should provide smooth and efficient administration for his archival establishment and cultivate wholesome relations with external agencies and the public. He should keep the superior governing authority fully conversant with his archival achievements and needs. To all who make use of the archives, he should provide an efficient and expanding service. He should maintain helpful relations with other archival agencies and contribute to the development of his profession. He should stimulate a greater public use and appreciation of archives and interpret archival work to the public as a necessary factor in an enlightened society.

The American archivist is a scholar, an expert technician skilled in the arts of his profession, and a public administrator. If he is alert in every situation for the interests and usefulness of the archives in his custody and conscious of his opportunity to become a highly significant factor in American scholarship and culture, he will hardly be able to restrict his function to the preservation of archives. He will discover that archival production, collection, preservation, and use

are interrelated parts of an integral process which can not and should not be too rigidly compartmentalized. If one part is neglected, the other parts and the whole suffer. He will also learn that he is better qualified than anyone else to concern himself with the entire range of archival interests and must do so in order to save archives from impairment by administrators, politicians, and researchers and to make his own work most effective and fruitful.

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LOCAL ARCHIVES AND THE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT

THE increasing province of government and the intensity of its activities made necessary by the progressive complexity of society have raised new problems and brought new solutions.¹ Despite the unsolved problems involved in the task of bringing to the electorate an understanding of the complex and often highly technical instrumentation of government today, the people of the United States still cling to their faith in popular control. Based upon popular education, when it began to increase in complexity, democratic government applied the remedy of more education. Today its fate may lie in research.

Happily, achievements already made, in progress, or projected, point toward a new era in local political studies, and so in local government which is the backbone of democratic government generally. These developments include new agencies for research, new sources of information opened up through the production of new tools for research, the creation of new techniques and methods in research, and the invention of mechanical devices by which the raw materials or the finished products may be disseminated.

New institutions for research in matters pertaining to government may be endowed, privately supported, organized as adjuncts to institutions of higher learning, or they may be official governmental agencies. The latter may be organized as a part of a particular established agency of government and designed primarily to serve its needs; or they may be organized independently to perform tasks in the interests of government generally and of the public at large. It is with this latter type and especially with the Historical Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration that this discussion deals, because scholars generally are less familiar with this new type of activity than with others.² The latter will be considered only

¹ "Government is getting much wider in scope, we shall want men of great ability, a knowledge of social affairs and in touch with life. But the kind of training and temperament and the *class* rather than the degree of ability are nowhere worked out." Sir Josiah Stamp, "The Administrator and a Planned Society," *Public Administration*, xvi (1938), 3-22. See also Dr. Robert C. Binkley, "The Cultural Program of the W.P.A.," *Harvard Educational Review*, ix (1939), 156-174.

² John Van Male in "Union Catalogs and the Point of Diminishing Returns," a paper read at the meeting of the American Library Association at Kansas City, June, 1938, emphasizes the point that research scholarship in the United States is no longer exclusively academic, and that governmental research, business and industrial research, and the growth

in so far as may be necessary to fix the Historical Records Survey in its historical and social setting in an attempt to assess the potential significance of the factors which may shed a new light on the problems of government, especially of local government.

Let us begin by looking backward some three centuries to the time when Da Vinci, Galileo, and Francis Bacon undertook to renovate knowledge with a view to its practical application to human affairs by building anew on the basis of observation and experiment. This method lent itself more readily to the physical sciences than it did to the social sciences. In time there arose new social conditions and new political concepts which resulted in what we call the industrial revolution and in political revolutions. These combined to bring about profound changes, especially in local government, beginning with the first half of the eighteenth century.³ By 1909 in England the justice of the peace had been shorn of all except his judicial duties, and greatly expanded administrative duties had been vested in a council and special boards. Similarly, in the United States the earlier functions of

of a class of amateur scholars are now important factors. This same point was stressed by Dr. E. G. Nourse, the Social Science Research Council's representative at the ninth annual meeting of the Social Science Research Conference of the Pacific Coast in his address on April 7, 1939. The Bureau of Public Administration of the University of California publishes an impressive list of *Governmental Research Organizations in the Western States* (Berkeley, 1935). The National Archives, the Society of American Archivists, the Library of Congress, the American Library Association, the Association of State Libraries, the American Historical Association, the American Bibliographical Society, the American Documentation Institute, and numerous other agencies maintain a high degree of co-operation with WPA projects engaged in research. Dr. Solon J. Buck has stated that the Joint Committee on Materials for Research "serves in effect as an advisory committee for the Historical Records Survey." XIVth Conference International Federation for Documentation (1938), *Transactions*. The American Library Association has a special Historical Records Survey Committee of which Dr. Henry O. Severance of the Library of Congress is chairman, and the director of the Historical Records Survey serves on its committee on archives and libraries. Appropriate committees of the American Historical Association co-operate directly and intimately with this and other WPA projects. *American Historical Review*, XLII (1937), 614-615; Am. Hist. Assoc., *Annual Report*, 1936, I, 52-59. Historians early recognized the quality of the research being carried on. In a letter to the Works Progress Administrator dated September 20, 1937, the executive secretary of the American Historical Association, Dr. Conyers Read in speaking of the Historical Records Survey stated:

I know of no other survey of national records in the world to compare with this one. . . . I used to think that the British Historical Manuscripts Commission furnished the pattern which we would do well to copy in America, but nothing the Historical Manuscripts Commission has ever done can compare in scope or accuracy with the work of Mr. Evans and his colleagues.

³D. Ellis speaks of the "growth of the idea that local government was more than a presentment of nuisances before amateur lawyers" during this period. "The Development of Local Government Administration since the Eighteenth Century," *Public Administration*, XV (1937), 215-226.

local government have been increasingly absorbed by the state and federal governments, while the counties and other local governments have been taking on new social duties and have been creating special authorities.⁴

To cope with the situations thus created, extra-legal associations have been formed, state-wide, national, and even international in scope.⁵ But the amount of aid that such agencies can give is limited in the absence of solid statistical information from local sources.⁶ Academic interest in local government has broadened in scope and increased in intensity, and has now spread outside the field of political science.⁷ But as rapidly as interest has increased, the rate at which the bulk of the sources of information has increased has been even more rapid.⁸ Special schools in public administration and associations of these agencies have been formed to instruct and do research. Recently the Social Science Research Council formed a special committee on public administration. The problem of controlling factual

⁴ H. P. Jones, "Progress in County Government," *National Review*, xxiii, 502; C. M. Kneier, "Development of Newer County Functions," *American Political Science Review*, xxiv (1930), 134-140; L. D. Melton, "The Elimination of Township Government in Oklahoma," *National Municipal Review*, xxvii (1938), 405-407; J. E. Pate, "Trends in County Government," *Social Forces*, xvi (1938), 418-426; P. W. Wager, "County Government," *Municipal Year Book*, 1936, 120; Clyde F. Snider, "County and Township Government in 1935-1936," *American Political Science Review*, xxxi (1937), 884-913. Among the special authorities may be mentioned districts which, in California, for example, include those for water supply, irrigation, drainage, reclamation, water conservation, fire protection, health, sanitation, schools, highways and roads, harbors, airports, public utilities, regional planning, and others.

⁵ For instance, the International City Managers' Association, the Civil Service Assembly of the United States, the American Municipal Association, the National Association of Assessing Officials, the Municipal Finance Officers' Association, the Council of State Governments, the Public Administration Clearing House, the Governmental Research Association, and the like. The International Union of Local Authorities, created in 1913, has offices in Brussels where it maintains a library. It plans an international exchange of information and research. It publishes in London an organ called *Local Government Administration* and, jointly with the International Institute of Administrative Sciences, a periodical called *Tablettes Documentaires*. The Union has an American committee and American public officials attend its conferences.

⁶ "We have been one of the backward peoples of the world in the organization of localized information," and "Our municipal statistics today are worse kept and less published than they were in 1880." Robert C. Binkley, as cited in note 1.

⁷ A cursory examination of periodicals and of indexes to periodical literature indicates that during the past decade the amount of attention paid to local government has roughly doubled, that the field has expanded, the number of periodicals devoted to political science has increased, and that interest in local government has spread to legal, philosophical, and business magazines. In 1938 the *American Political Science Review* devoted 25 per cent of its pages to local government and administration, and about 2.5 per cent to research. Report of the managing editor, xxxiii (1939), 99.

⁸ Solon J. Buck, as cited in note 2; G. E. Milward, "The Collection and Distribution of Information," *Public Administration*, xv (1937), 226-229.

information, revealed quite frankly in bibliographies and book reviews, is one of the acute problems facing such groups and agencies. Treatises on government, especially local rural government, and periodicals reveal a curious apathy toward archival materials, in contrast with the active interest which historians and librarians have so long shown in unpublished source materials.⁹

This is the more curious since "the problem of publication no longer exists, if by publication we understand the servicing of things . . . to those who wish to read them."¹⁰ This reference is to the near-print processes which are making source materials increasingly accessible. Of the fifteen hundred entries for California in Hodgson's *The Official Publications of American Counties. A Union List*, the greater part are mimeographed.¹¹ The Hayes Memorial Library has photographed on 16-mm. film a series (a hundred thousand exposures) of the Rutherford B. Hayes papers, many of the items in which bear on foreign policy. Biblionfilm Service was established in November, 1934. Major micro-copying laboratories may soon be set up in England and France also. In 1936 the American Library Association created a committee on photographic reproduction and, two years later, the *Journal of Documentary Reproduction* began publication under the editorship of Dr. Vernon D. Tate of the National Archives.¹² Dr. Robert C. Binkley as chairman of the committee on photographic reproduction of the American Library Association speaks of equipping universities with blueprint processes for the publication of theses, and gives specifications for their preparation for publication by this method. The National Research Council recently appointed Dr. James B. Conant, president of Harvard University, to head a committee on scientific aids to learning; and this committee is now engaged in studying the application of micro-photography to scholarship. Today one might replace the word

⁹ The public archives commission of the American Historical Association began its activities in this field in 1900. The National Association of State Libraries also has long labored in this same vineyard. The committee on archives and libraries of the A.L.A., mentioned in note 2, has been very active of late. See J. K. Wilcox and A. F. Kuhlman, eds., *Public Documents, 1938, with Archives and Libraries* (Chicago, 1938).

¹⁰ Robert C. Binkley, "Typescript Formats for Blueprint Reproduction," *Journal of Documentary Reproduction*, 1 (1938), 75-78. See also *ibid.*, "Techniques and Policies of Documentary Reproduction," a memo issued by the Joint Committee on Materials for Research, 1938.

¹¹ Fort Collins, Colorado, privately published, 1937.

¹² The information in this paragraph unless otherwise indicated is drawn from the *Journal of Documentary Reproduction*, 1 (1938). A bibliography of materials on photographic reproduction is contained in 1, 87-123.

"French" by the name of any social science in the statement¹³ that French science must make general use of near-print processes if it is to retain its rank.

This survey is intended to suggest that for all the associations of public officials and of scholars, and for all the various agencies devoted to research, and in spite of the mechanical devices for the economical transmission of information (especially in unpublished source materials), practical public office holders, academic theorists, and the electorate alike suffer from a dearth of sound and necessary information. This want is now being filled by the labors of the Historical Records Survey of WPA and allied agencies,¹⁴ so that it is important to scholars that they should understand the program and achievements of the survey.

While the scope of the tasks it has undertaken is extremely broad, embracing the preparation of inventories of public and private archives, manuscripts, early printed materials, and portraits, the primary task is the inventorying of public records, particularly those of federal agencies, states, counties, cities, and towns. It is not this alone that makes the undertaking of high importance to the study and administration of government: It is also the manner in which the task has been approached and the form in which the inventories appear. They are far more than mere directories to unpublished source materials. When completed for the 3,066 counties, the innumerable cities and towns, the federal agencies, and the forty-eight states, they will constitute a veritable encyclopaedia of government, particularly of local government, in the United States.¹⁵ The manner in which the plan was arrived at, in which the work was organized and directed, and the system according to which the results are presented, should go far toward removing the initial handicap under which political science has labored as a result of its tardiness in taking account of the archival field.

¹³ Jean Hubert and Charles Perrat, "La photographie au service des archives et des bibliothèques," *Archives et Bibliothèques*, II (1936), 17-28.

¹⁴ The public archives commission of the American Historical Association has been succeeded by a committee on historical source materials with subcommittees on public archives and historical manuscripts, and "the survey of state and local historical records [the HRS] is carrying out a number of the functions assigned to the committee on historical source materials." Am. Hist. Assoc., *Ann. Rept.*, 1936, I, 53. See note 2 also.

¹⁵ A *Bulletin* of the American Library Association, XXXII (1938), 804, speaks of "The development of a set of guides to source materials that should enable political scientists to prepare a definitive study of the agencies and functions of county government in America."

For this monumental undertaking was not arrived at haphazardly. Behind it lay a generation of experience and recent experiments, the fruits of which it inherited through the advice and co-operation of experts in the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and learned societies.¹⁶ Dr. A. R. Newsome as chairman of the public archives commission, Dr. Jean Stephenson, chairman of the genealogical records committee of the D.A.R., Dr. Francis Philbrick of the American Legal History Society, and Dr. Robert C. Binkley, chairman of the joint committee on materials for research of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies gave of their experience and time; and the latter served for several months as a field supervisor to assist in organizing the project. The director, Dr. Luther H. Evans, is a political scientist, with ten or more years of teaching and research experience at Stanford, New York University, Dartmouth, and Princeton. The consequence is that the products are designed to meet the standards of scholarship and the needs, not of any single learned field, but of public officials, archivists, librarians, social scientists, and the public at large.

Scattered experiments during the years 1933-1935 in the use of relief labor for inventorying local records were successful enough to justify the establishment of a national program, and at the same time emphasized the weaknesses of isolated and sporadic local undertakings. The desirability of a uniform system of reporting and editing standard information on a national basis was clearly indicated. This has been achieved under the nation-wide project, which began operations early in 1936. Methods and procedures fixed by the national office have been enforced uniformly by means of rigid inspections from Washington and within the states themselves. While

¹⁶ Solon J. Buck (as cited in note 2) speaks of government projects in bibliography as resulting from a desire to help unemployed "white-collar" workers, and "also a result of realization by a few people that there is need for projects too vast to be financed except by the government and that it is possible to carry on such projects with 'relief labor' under competent direction." The proposal to use relief labor appears to have originated with Dr. Jean Stephenson in a letter to Dr. Garrison, the archivist of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in December, 1930. Dr. Garrison early organized a relief project to survey local archives, and during the winter of 1933-1934 co-operated with the American Legal History Society, the American Historical Association, the American Military History Foundation (now the American Military Institute), the National Guard Bureau of the War Department, and other agencies interested in surveying source materials, and with the assistance of a grant from the Social Science Research Council tried to initiate surveys in all states, but were unable to continue co-ordination of the work.

the workers were being trained and the data was being gathered, inspected, and verified, the national office was busy devising editorial plans and experimenting with them in one state or another. Two years of organizing, training, and experimentation followed before the kind of inventory now being produced was fixed upon and approved. Now they can be produced rapidly as well as accurately.

The techniques developed by the Historical Records Survey are in themselves significant to scholarship because they point the way toward methods by which ultimately the mass of unpublished materials to which guides and other aids are being prepared may be exploited successfully by scholars. Briefly, the processes may be described as the application of the assembly line system to scholarship.¹⁷ Routine and mechanical operations are carried out by workers who at first may be without special skills, but who generally develop under expert technical supervision the aptitudes required for the successful performance of these tasks. The extent to which this learning process goes on and the heights it often reaches are a source of constant surprise and gratification. While the workers' background of theoretical knowledge is not as full as that of the academically trained man, and while their knowledge of governmental operations may not equal that of the holders of public office, they can furnish valuable information to the professorial scholar, and have on many occasions given practical instruction in their duties to public officials.¹⁸

This they are able to do because of the amount and quality of the

¹⁷ In a *Memorandum on Agenda for Meeting of WPA Officials and Representatives of Learned Societies*, January 7, 1939, Dr. Binkley stated:

The difference between the kind of work that is here involved and the kind of work that goes on in graduate schools and research institutions is comparable to the difference between factory production and the production of craftsmen. . . . Scholars who think that they can make but little use of clerical labor have closed their eyes to the vast quantity of clerical labor that underlies their supply of information, whether it is in the form of statistical reports or the dictionary catalogue of a great library. . . . The development of our great library system out of the organized work of a vast corps of cataloguers whose operations were essentially clerical is enough to show us that factory labor has its place in the intellectual world.

¹⁸ The following is quoted from a recent letter by the state editor of the survey in a Western state:

A Mr. ——— was recently elected a member of the . . . board of county commissioners. As Mr. ——— was unfamiliar with his exact duties, powers, and responsibilities as well as those of other county officials he must supervise, he recently called at our . . . office and requested a copy of our latest county inventory and asked . . . our . . . supervisor, if he would call at his home that night and go over the inventory section by section so that he might become familiar with the duties of each office and the records required of it.

research that goes on as a preliminary to the editing of the inventories; for these books contain not merely a description of the records of every governmental agency of the county, but even larger in bulk are the essays and the finding aids. The volumes are divided into three parts. The introductory section contains a table of contents, a brief historical sketch of the county, a general essay on the organization and functions of the county government, past and present, a chart or charts of the governmental organization, and an essay on the housing and care of the records. The second section of the inventory contains a detailed essay on each office of county government and a detailed listing of its records. The third section contains topical and chronological indexes which add to the reference value of the volumes.

But it is not these features alone that give these inventories their special value for comparative studies in local government. It is the extent¹⁹ to which and the manner in which the introductory matter and the finding aids are introduced, and the method in the sequence of the offices and the arrangement of the records that give these volumes their special value to archivists and students of local government. The offices and their records are arranged in such an order as will reflect their relationships and the processes by which public business is transacted. The inventories heed the archival principal known to the profession as *provenance* or *respect des fonds*. The records are arranged according to the office of origin rather than of deposit, with the understanding that a record begun in one office and carried through one or more others belongs to the office which completes the record by taking final action on it, unless by statutory provisions legal custody is placed elsewhere.

As regards sequence, generally legislative functions come first, followed by the county clerk, recorder, then judicial and law enforcement agencies, financial agencies, and finally administrative agencies such as are concerned with health, education, engineering, and agriculture. Variations may be necessary as between states or classes of counties or individual counties within a state, but the principles of arrangement remain the same. Minor agencies are arranged accord-

¹⁹ According to an A.L.A. *Bulletin*, XXXII (1938), 804, county archives inventories average 132 pages; historical essays, 3; essays on housing and care of records, 2.5; and essays on governmental organization, 31. The entries take up an average of 48 per cent of the space, indexes 15 per cent, and essays 37 per cent.

ing to function rather than according to constitutional or statutory responsibility to a major subdivision.²⁰

The significance of these principles in a study of the organization and functioning of county government past as well as present is self-evident. But there is another aspect of equal importance. Grounded in these principles, workers have been able to arrange records in county courthouses according to archival principles, either before inventorying them or afterwards, especially when the records were being moved to a new courthouse. Lost or forgotten items or collections have been found and important documents rescued from destruction. Such services tend, temporarily at least, to attract the attention of custodians to the value of their records.²¹ In many states the activities of the survey are leading toward movements to revise the legal provisions regarding public records.²² Published inventories in the hands of officials will tend to provide a safeguard against abuses including capricious destruction. This tendency will no doubt become increasingly evident as investigators form the habit of doing research in local archives.

The extent to which such research is already being done by workers of the Historical Records Survey is not widely understood. The office essays are now tending to become digests of much of the most important materials in the records themselves. The basic idea of these essays on county government as a whole and those relating to particular offices is to make comparative studies of the past and present organization and functioning of government. The evolution of each office whose records are listed is set forth accurately and in detail in

²⁰ Sample entries which illustrate the arrangement within a series, together with detailed descriptions of cross references, the treatment of prior and subsequent records, and the like, will be found in "The Analysis of County Records" by Luther H. Evans and Edythe Weiner in *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*, 1 (1938), 186-200.

²¹ "A new local archival economy should grow out of it." *A.L.A. Bulletin*, xxxii (1938), 804. In at least one state workers from the survey have been employed as county archivists. The former governor of Nevada stated that the inventorying and the results are "of vital interest to every public official and those interested in public affairs." The survey files in Washington and in the states are full of similar indications that a general improvement in local archival economy has been achieved.

²² Notably in Vermont where the survey co-operated closely with a commission under the chairmanship of Mr. John Spargo which was appointed by Governor Charles M. Smith in accordance with the provisions of Joint Resolution 306, Acts and Resolves of the Legislature of 1935, to investigate into and report on the condition of local records in the state. *Report of the Commission to Make a Survey of Early Records of Counties, Towns and Villages of the State* (Mimeographed pamphlet, Montpelier, September 1, 1936).

such a way as to show how each fits into the general pattern of county government. The original organization, subsequent additions, subtractions, and combinations are fully described. The sources and the methods used are such that students of local government need have no hesitation in accepting the results.²³

The most usual sources are constitutions and charters, acts of territorial and state legislatures, judicial decisions, and in some instances the opinions of attorneys-general. The processes by which completeness and accuracy are secured involve laborious steps and are formidable undertakings. They involve a page-by-page examination of all pertinent matter in constitutions, acts, and digests. The information secured as a result of this step is organized by offices and thereunder by structure, powers, duties, and records required to be kept.

This gives the legal requirements; but that is not enough. It is necessary to discover how the legal provisions have been carried out. In some states instructions have gone forth to search certain series of local records page by page and to abstract or transcribe information relating to past and present practices which may illuminate the essays. New appointments, changes in the form of government generally, variations in practices among counties, and similar information is sought, and when it is used, precise citations are made to the record by title and entry number in the inventory. A rigid and complete documentation shows where to seek further information. As a result of these methods much basic research data for county government has been assembled and will be accessible even if the original records should be destroyed, as frequently happens from fire, flood, and other hazards.²⁴

²³ The testimony of scholarship as revealed in book reviews, news notes, and correspondence, is overwhelming on this point:

In the historical sketches of the parish and its offices there are literally thousands of citations to constitutions, codes, acts, and revised statutes, and to the most authoritative secondary sources. A careful check reveals that research has been accurate, exhaustive, and meticulous. *The Journal of Southern History*, IV (1938), 128.

In a letter dated January 23, 1939, Mr. R. W. G. Vail, permanent secretary of the Bibliographical Society of America, wrote:

This project, though it employs many previously unskilled assistants, is under the direct supervision of a group of the most skilled specialists in this field in the country. I have worked with them and assisted them since the inception of the project and I know that their work is careful, accurate, and of the utmost value to the historian and the bibliographer.

Mr. A. V. Judges, an English scholar who visited the project in Massachusetts, wrote to the director: "My impression is that the work being carried on in Massachusetts, particularly on the legal side, is of quite remarkable quality."

²⁴ A point emphasized by Dr. Binkley in a letter to Dr. Evans dated February 18,

Sources of information on county government are not confined to published and unpublished materials; often it comes from the officials and the people themselves. This is a precious source, and the more so because it is of a kind that ordinarily (at least on any considerable scale) escapes the notice of the cloistered scholar. The files of the Historical Records Survey are filled with curious lore that sheds light on the ways in which local government is and has been carried on, especially in the more remote rural regions. This is information gathered at first hand and by observation in every county in the United States, and which could not be duplicated by any scholar or group of scholars however active and vigilant in view of the variety of the sources and their dispersed character. Sometimes it sheds a fresh and important light on the political genius of our people.

In illustration, there is a mountain community in Utah where the law enforcing agencies have long lain dormant, having been succeeded by a kind of informal social pressure which leaves the bench undisturbed and the jail untenanted. When no records could be found in a certain rural county in Oregon, the responsible official was questioned. The official was a lady of sensibility who occupied her time with embroidery and with the improvement of her mind. She explained that she considered it unladylike to keep public records; and the community was apparently content. In the same county no court records could be found. The explanation was simplicity itself: "They just didn't pay no attention to the county court!" Searches for the records of justices of the peace have often been arduous, even adventurous, and to no avail. One justice had no records for the sound reason that he had never had an opportunity to function in his official capacity; and it was a cross he had to bear that the only case ever to have been brought before him—a charge of murder—for reasons still a mystery to him, had been summarily removed from his jurisdiction. Many of the records reflect curious procedures in American judicial administration and local government in general under frontier conditions, from the seventeenth century down to the present time.

By describing local governments and their records the archives inventories are bringing together much basic information for com-

1938 in connection with the series of county histories prepared in Oregon and published in the *Commonwealth Review*. Only a short time before a county seat in Oregon had been destroyed during a forest fire.

parative studies, but to do a thorough and complete job of research, students of local government will have to go beyond the inventories to the original sources themselves. Here the inventories will prove to be basic tools for research. They can tell the researcher what series of records, of what dates, in what amounts, form, and condition, existed as of the date of the inventory, and what their contents are in general. The reasons why gaps occur must be explained if possible. The search for such information often brings to light missing materials and strange archival practices, such as keeping records at home under the official's bed. If records have been discontinued or consolidated the fact is stated.²⁵

The by-products of these processes are often valuable in themselves. The checklists of records required or allowed by law to be kept, and the compilations resulting from legal research have their practical uses. In some states checklists have been made of all incorporated towns that have ever existed. Research in county boundaries has been necessary. The state of Utah found it important to study county government under the provisional state of Deseret and to make a checklist of the records required to be kept by its county officials.

While the production of inventories of the records of counties and other units of local government has been given priority, considerable progress has been made by the Historical Records Survey in other fields which contain materials for the study of local government: state archives, records of federal agencies in the states, church records, manuscript collections, early imprints, etc. To date the field and preliminary editorial work on county archives may be considered to be completed for about one half of the 3,066 counties, and volumes covering more than two hundred counties have been published, usually in mimeograph form.²⁶ The surveying of state archives has been completed in only a few states, and only one provisional volume without essays has been published.²⁷ Although this is a mere list of records, and those of a young state, it is astonishing how much light a mere enumeration of records in 275 mimeographed pages throws

²⁵ In this connection, see note 20.

²⁶ In North Carolina where the historical commission prints the inventories, two volumes containing the inventories of the records of 66 counties have been published. The third volume for the remaining 34 counties, is now in the hands of the printer.

²⁷ *A List of Records of the State of Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City, Historical Records Survey, 1939).

upon the organization and functioning of government when the archives are listed in a logical sequence.

The Survey of Federal Archives, begun under the sponsorship of the National Archives and under the direction of Dr. Philip M. Hamer of its staff, is now in some states an integral part of the Historical Records Survey, and in others its work is carried on by local projects, the Historical Records Survey furnishing the necessary editorial direction and co-ordination. To this end Dr. Hamer has been appointed associate national director of the Historical Records Survey.²⁸ This survey of federal records is about half completed. It also has useful essays and special publications.²⁹

The bibliographical undertakings of the survey when completed will provide a valuable implement for scholars. The farthest advanced is an annotated continuation of Larned's bibliography of American history, which is about ready for publication, except for checking and verification. The critical evaluations of the works listed are taken largely from the reviews of them which appeared in scholarly publications.³⁰ The work of the National Association of State Libraries in the field of state documents having come to a halt when its grant of funds was spent,³¹ negotiations were begun with the Historical Records Survey to continue the work, and an experimental beginning has been made in Illinois, to list the state documents for a single decade.

However, the most ambitious undertaking in the bibliographical field is the inventory of American imprints which is continuing and expanding a field in which great individual bibliographers have long labored under heavy handicaps. Through their labors the period prior to 1800 was reasonably well covered for the Atlantic Coast states, though locations were often missing. The period from 1800

²⁸ A description of this undertaking, its progress and present status will be found in the annual reports of the archivist of the United States: *Second Annual Report, 1935-1936*, 88-103; *Third Annual Report, 1936-1937*, 93-110.

²⁹ As the essay in which are described the territorial courts in the Northwest Territory in *Series II. The Federal Courts. No. 21. Michigan*, and *A Directory to United States Government Agencies Maintained and Operating in the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, Historical Records Survey, 1938). This volume gives 77 pages of agencies and has a 30-page index. A map shows the location of federal agencies by means of red dots.

³⁰ The Librarian of Congress in his *Annual Report for 1937* (p. 45) stated:

Among the major checking undertakings conducted during the year may be mentioned that of the W.P.A. Historical Records Survey supplement to the Larned project, which searched more than 25,000 titles, with a location average of better than 97 per cent.

³¹ A.L.A. *Bulletin*, XXXII (1938), 993-996.

to 1876, when the *United States Catalog* began, was generally neglected, and in the South and West the surface was hardly scratched. Here again co-operative methods have shown their superiority to such an extent that Dr. Solon J. Buck speaks of the day of the individual bibliographer as a thing of the past.³² This must be so. The individual bibliographer cannot hope to cover collections in remote communities, even by the questionnaire method, and cannot go through old newspaper files systematically for publication notices or wade through archives for imprints attached to reports as exhibits or which otherwise may have come there.

Under the expert editorial supervision of Mr. Douglas C. McMurtrie, long and widely known for his activities in the field of early American imprints, the deficiencies in earlier lists are being remedied. Titles, many of them new, others of them with new locations, flowed into the editorial office in April, 1939, at the rate of sixty thousand per week. The co-operative methods devised are interesting in themselves; but the most significant factor is the progressive technique evolved. A beginning is made in some cases through an informal short-title memorandum of imprints for each state, designed to serve as a guide to the workers. The second stage is the publication, usually by mimeograph, of a preliminary checklist for each state, containing all information available at the moment of issue. This product is a substantial contribution to bibliography, though experience suggests the desirability of going beyond it to the third stage of a thoroughly rechecked and amplified product of unassailable accuracy and inclusiveness. To date some half dozen checklists have been published which have received very favorable notice; and a dozen more are well advanced toward publication.

The principal importance of these progressive bibliographies is to create a great reservoir of titles from which scholars in any particular

³² As cited in note 2, Dr. Buck stated:

In 1868, when Sabin began the publication of his great *Biblioteca Americana*, and even as late as 1903, when Evans issued the first volume of his *American Bibliography*, it was thought to be possible for a single individual to carry out a comprehensive project in the field; but it is significant that Sabin's work, after standing still for many years, was completed under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and that Evans' project, suspended with his death, will probably never be continued.

In his *Official Publications of American Counties* (cited in note 11) Mr. Hodgson states that he questioned 325 libraries and received replies from 194. A co-operative project could have covered 100 per cent of the libraries instead of 60 per cent, and have searched in other repositories also.

field may draw materials for critical and selective bibliographies. But in addition there is a considerable amount of information of interest in the study of government to be gathered from the mere description of titles. This takes the form of descriptions of published compilations of laws, statutes, and legislative journals, legal treatises, political pamphlets and broadsides, and the like. The Kentucky checklist (1787-1810), for example, contains locations for the hitherto unlocated Kentucky laws and statutes of 1797.³³ In the same checklist we find described a broadside of 1797 containing resolutions drawn up by the farmers and planters of Fayette County against "the bellowings in favor of a convention as not originating among the people," and another of the same vintage urging a constitutional convention and the abolition of slavery.

The manuscripts program of the Historical Records Survey is also of significance to archivists and in the study of local government. Traditionally in the United States noncurrent public records have commonly been looked upon as of merely historical interest. This is everywhere reflected, and especially in the state legislatures which have frequently provided for the administration of archives as adjuncts to libraries or historical societies. Public records have frequently turned up in university libraries, in private historical societies, and even in private collections of manuscripts. There is one state capital in which public records are on display as part of a collection of curios in a public barroom. But in justice to the proprietor who is more of a publican than a sinner, it must be added that they are kept in a glass cabinet under lock and key.

The question whether or not public records in semipublic or private collections are archives has been debated with much wit and learning; but what concerns us here is the practical consideration that they fill gaps in archival materials and otherwise supplement them. In 1938 the Historical Records Survey published as its experimental entry into the manuscripts field *A Guide to Depositories of Manuscript Collections in the United States: 100 Sample Entries*. This virgin effort was well received. The survey program in manuscripts embraces: (1) a list of depositories of manuscripts, (2) a descriptive list of collections of manuscripts, and (3) calendars and other detailed inventories of manuscripts.

³³ *Acts Passed at the First Session of the Fifth General Assembly for the Commonwealth of Kentucky* (2 vols., Lexington, James H. Stewart, Printer to the Commonwealth, 1797).

Even a cursory examination of this initial selective list of depositories reveals a wealth of material of interest to archivists and students of government. The official correspondence of governors often finds a way into nonarchival depositories, as the library of Rutgers University. Sometimes, as in Connecticut and Florida, state papers are divided between two or more institutions. In the latter instance territorial and state records are divided between the state library and the Florida Historical Society. The Kentucky State Historical Society, the Wyoming State Library and Historical Department, and the Department of Archives of Louisiana State University have large holdings of county, town, and parish records. Territorial papers have often found their way into historical societies, as in Oregon and Colorado. In Oklahoma materials relating to the government of the Five Civilized Tribes are to be found in the state historical society and in the Phillips Collection at the state university. The latter contains also materials on territorial and early state government; and the state historical society has been enriched by the acquisition of tons of local records which for the most part would have been destroyed or lost except for the zeal of the Historical Records Survey in that state. Materials on national affairs (1814-1926), on outlying possessions (1867-1900) including the annexation of Hawaii, and on William Jennings Bryan, are reported in the Pettigrew Museum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Today, for all the associations of public officials and scholars, and for all the elaborate paraphernalia of scholarship, research in government still lacks accurate tools and methods. Present research methods depend largely upon concentrations of published materials which are often inadequate and need to be submitted to a critical appraisal. The larger accumulations are contained in a few research centers and are incomplete.³⁴ The greatest of libraries, though filled with the appallingly great output of the printing presses and served by a multiplication of library controls, give but a sampling of the records of civilization with which to meet the demands of modern science and the needs of modern society. For all the ingenuity of librarians, these vast collections can throw their feeble beams so far

³⁴ In order of amounts and in the order named, the greatest concentrations of printed materials for research are in New York, California, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia. New Mexico is the poorest state in printed source materials, followed in order by Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. Except for the excellent State Law Library in the small and remote capital town of Carson City, Nevada would rank lower. The statistics are from *School and Society*, XLVI (1937), 122-123.

and no farther. They can serve adequately only a limited number of metropolitan areas. Outside in the shadows are thousands of competent scholars and scores of thousands of potential scholars capable of useful service to the social sciences and who need only equipment, material, and contacts to generate light of their own. Facilities for the ready exchange of information exist but are still unorganized and are cumbersome. These deficiencies are in the way of being remedied. What may become in effect a second great library system for unpublished source materials is in the process of creation. When this will have been accomplished, great and hitherto untapped sources of information will be available for research. But the bulk of the materials will be so great and their repositories so widely scattered, that their exploitation will be beyond the powers of individual academic scholars alone, and new co-operative techniques will have to be devised or adapted for the employment of "auxiliary scholarship."

Already a beginning in this direction has been made under the leadership of the Social Science Research Council.³⁵ Already political scientists and others have been heard voicing their dissatisfaction with existing tools and methods. Dr. R. G. Tugwell recently complained³⁶ that Herbert Spencer's work gave only conclusions, whereas what political economists wanted was a tool for work. Felix Kaufmann recently wrote³⁷ that "the social scientist who deals with more general questions of his discipline soon meets problems which he cannot solve with the knowledge at his disposal and with the methods familiar to him." The dinner held by the American Political Science Association in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* brings to mind that scholar's dictum³⁸ that "however widely and carefully the materials may be gathered, their character makes it impossible that politics

³⁵ *Minutes and Proceedings of the Conference on Comparative Local History, September 23-26, 1937*, especially Appendix H containing Dr. Theodore C. Blegen's "Planning Local Research" and Dr. Robert C. Binkley's discussion of the cultural program of the WPA. Joseph Schafer of the Wisconsin Historical Society has issued a hectographed pamphlet, an *Outline for the Co-operative Study of Local History*. The Social Science Research Council's committee on public administration has a special committee on research materials which has adopted a program which aims at developing a science of public administration. William E. Mosher, "Case Studies in Public Administration," *American Political Science Review*, XXXIII (1939), 66-68.

³⁶ "Notes on the Uses of Exactitude in Politics," *Political Science Quarterly*, LIV (1939), 15-28.

³⁷ "The Significance of Methodology for the Social Sciences," *Social Research*, V (1938), 443-464.

³⁸ *Modern Democracies* (New York, 1921), I, 14.

should ever become a science in the sense in which mechanics or chemistry or botany is a science." But it is not necessary that politics should be a science in exactly the same sense as the physical sciences. Any set of facts are a fit subject for a science, which "comprises the entirety of conceivable ways to reach an ordered knowledge of the world."³⁹

After pointing out some of the disabilities under which political scientists have labored, Professor Mosher declared⁴⁰ that "whatever the difficulties may be, the political scientist must retain his faith in the possibility of surmounting them and must devise ways and means of accomplishing this end." The opening up of hitherto relatively inaccessible unpublished materials and the sum of the means and processes by which this is being done, justify that faith and offer an opportunity for closing the gap between the methods of the physical sciences and the social sciences, and the possibility of keeping abreast of social developments and rendering a badly needed service to organized society. Henceforth public and private archives will lie open to the students of local government in the United States. Henceforth it will be possible in some fields of political science to use the historical method and the comparative method to greater advantage. Henceforth it will be a practical possibility to substitute scientific hypotheses for dogmas as a point of departure in political studies;⁴¹ for what was it if not a lack of factual information that forced students of political theory to grope in the realms of speculation for a footing? But now new materials, new methods, new procedures are at hand.

Already a special committee on research materials has been formed by the Social Science Research Council to plan and experiment. Already there are thousands of relief workers throughout the United States who have been given a solid grounding in local governmental organization and administration, as well as in archival economy. When the social sciences shall have mobilized their legions for

³⁹ Kaufmann as cited in note 37. See also F. J. Teggart, *The Processes of History* (New Haven, 1918), 162; *ibid.*, *Theory of History* (New Haven, 1925), 155.

⁴⁰ As cited in note 35.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* The author emphasizes the need for co-operative methods. David Owen in an article "Co-operative History" in the *Yale Review*, XXIV (1934), 420-422, recognizes that the opening of archives and the floods of monographs (and one might add, of periodical literature) have already overwhelmed the digestive powers of individual scholars. At the conference on comparative local history (see note 35) Dr. Wirth of the University of Chicago asserted that local research should provide social scientists with data necessary to set up and confirm hypotheses.

auxiliary research,⁴² these as well as teachers, public officials, and graduate students, will be found enrolled. And who may tell what the repercussions may be upon them, upon scholarship, upon holders of public offices, and upon the electorate of the land? Herein may lie part of the answer to critics of democratic self-government. For, to quote Dr. Binkley:⁴³

The way is now open to scholars in every field to take counsel together to see how far the kind of labor that is available when unemployed and needy people work intermittently at public employment can be made to enrich American culture.

And we might remember also that "the amount of money devoted to the cultural part of the relief program is so substantial that it should, if properly used, date an epoch in American development."⁴⁴

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Historical Records Survey

⁴² *Statement on Auxiliary Research*, a memorandum dated February 5, 1938, drawn up by Dr. Robert C. Binkley for the Joint Committee on Materials for Research. Dr. Binkley has elaborated on this theme in "History for a Democracy," *Minnesota History*, XVIII (1937), 1-27, and in *New Tools, New Recruits, for the Republic of Letters*, a memorandum dated November, 1934, to the Joint Committee on Materials for Research.

⁴³ As cited in note 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF SOUTH CAROLINA¹

A FEW years before the Civil War one of Carolina's sons wrote to his bride-to-be of his interest in the colonial history of his native state and of the records revealing that history. The scattering of these records he lamented, and he recalled that as a member of the legislature some years before he had suggested that a person be appointed to collect in the European depositories the historical materials relating to the state; but this "fell through from general indifference." He yet hoped that "these mute but pleading tokens of the past [might] be collected and bound up into a sheaf of history which would be the possession of all ages." "Vanity makes us boast of our history," he added, "but who knows it—who cares for it. . . . Modern misers have followed in the track of De Soto in his search after gold through Carolina and Georgia, and yet they know it not. The stones and pillars are falling away from the pathway of the past. . . ."² Another half dozen years and the ravages of war were to bring destruction to a flourishing civilization, creating new history while obliterating many of the records of the past.

Yet any one who examines the South Carolina archives must be impressed by the vast amount of records which have been preserved in spite of wars, invasions, fires, and earthquakes. Equally impressive until recent years was the unfortunate state of preservation and the lack of any systematic organization of these records. One marvels that South Carolinians, notably loyal to their state and proud of her history—even to the extent of being called provincials and ancestor-worshippers—should have permitted their ancient records to moulder in basements and be scattered in various depositories. But they did. Under the circumstances it is not remarkable that South Carolinians should feel that much of their history has been misinterpreted by ignorant critics. Yet this is not altogether the fault of the critics.

¹ I am indebted to Dr. Anne K. Gregorie, state director of the Historical Records Survey in South Carolina, and to Mr. Carl L. Epting, Jr., of the University of South Carolina, for permission to use notes made by Mr. Epting on the work of the office of the colony's secretary. For several references I am indebted to Mr. James F. Hopkins, a graduate student in the department of history, Duke University. Mr. A. S. Salley, secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, has been very kind and helpful in ways too numerous to mention.

² Laurence Keitt to Sue Sparks, Sept. 19, 1855. Keitt MSS, Duke University Library.

From the proprietary period to the Civil War the legislatures and the governors gave considerable attention to the care of historical records. The proprietors of Carolina laid down careful instructions for the keeping of the records, not so much for posterity, of course, as for self-protection. Under a law fixing fees and penalties a registry of births, deaths, and marriages was kept, and a few years later registers were provided for recording mortgages and deeds of sale.³ An act of 1694 provided "for the better and more certain keeping and preserving of old registers and Publique Writings of this part of the Province." Separate books were provided for keeping records of the courts, wills, land grants and warrants, cattle markings, the names of persons arriving in the province, ship bonds and "other writings" relating to the entry of vessels, and for recording powers of attorney.⁴ In a book of "Commissions and Instructions, 1685-1715," we find a commission to John Wick, secretary and registrar of the province of Carolina south and west of the Cape Fear, authorizing him to be present at all meetings of the Palatine Court and Grand Council and to keep an exact register of all their acts and orders, and also to receive from the surveyor-general all certificates of land laid out and surveyed according to the proper warrants, and to draw up such leases or conveyances. And he was to do all other things that had been done by the former secretaries. In 1698 the Commons House of Assembly discovered that "want or neglect of Registring and Recording of Sales, Conveyances and Mortgages of Lands and other Goods and Chattels," had "encouraged and given opportunity to several knavish and necessitous persons to make two or more sales, conveyances and mortgages. . . ." Therefore it was enacted that sales, conveyances, and mortgages, except original grants, should be first registered in Charleston, and this should be evidence of first sale.⁵

Furthermore, it was necessary to provide for the safekeeping of the records. In 1691 we find the proprietors remonstrating with the notorious Seth Sothell: "Wee are Informed that you have by force

³ The register of births, deaths, and marriages was begun about 1682; the mortgage records in 1696. By an act of 1706 the keeping of birth records, etc., was delegated to the church vestry. *Stat. of S.C.*, II, 120-121, 137-138, 15 n.

⁴ Public Records of South Carolina, XIX, 323. Hereafter cited Pub. Rec. S.C. This law is also quoted by A. S. Salley, "Preservation of South Carolina History," in *North Carolina Historical Review*, IV (1927), 146.

⁵ *Stat. of S.C.*, II, 137. Thomas Cooper, editor of the first five volumes of the *Statutes*, says (II, 705) that this act commenced the system of registering and recording land conveyances.

taken all ye Records of Carolina out of the hands of Mr. Grimball our Secretary . . . hee being an Officer of Greatest trust in the Governmt next to the Governor. . . . [We] must adhere to haveing our Secretary entirely dependt on the Proprietors in generall.”⁶ Later it was necessary to pass an act for preventing the embezzlement of the public records, and for recovering records taken. “Sundry evil-disposed and disaffected persons, in open and manifest violation and breach of the several laws of force in this Settlement, and in opposition to the now present establishment, have made away with several of the publick and private Acts of Assembly, as also all the records of grants, mortgages, registries, and other titles of the several inhabitants to their respective lands, as also all the original wills, and divers other publick records of this Settlement, or concealed the same. . . .”⁷

Acts of God also had to be reckoned with. In 1752 George Hunter, the surveyor-general, presented a memorial stating “that by the violence of the late dreadful hurricane, whereby Craven’s bastion is ruinous the sea bursting upon the doors of the house therein whereby the presses, book cases, desks &ca. wherein were contained all the original warrants of survey, all the duplicates of plats surveyed . . . the books of record thereof, the reports on His Maty’s quit rents &ca were thereby overset and burst open, floating about in four and an half feet salt water, and are thereby much injured and defaced; and some lost, notwithstanding the utmost care was then taken by the memorialist to save them, who has ever since used all possible endeavours to render them useful by sending them to ovens, sunning & airing them when weather would permit and resorting.”⁸

From time to time committees of the legislature were appointed to examine and inspect the records and public papers in the secretary’s office. For example, we find Captain Christopher Gadsden chairman of a committee to inspect the records and report to the House the “condition in which they are, how kept, and preserved, and the most effectual manner to prevent any loss, removal, or embasslement, in any paper, deed, or other record lodged there.” Gadsden reported that upon searching the journals, it was found that the

⁶ A. S. Salley, ed., *Commissions and Instructions from the Lords Proprietors, 1685-1715* (Columbia, 1916), 27-28.

⁷ Feb. 12, 1719, *Stat. of S.C.*, III, 98-99. Also quoted in *Ann. Rept. of S.C. Hist. Comm.*, 1906, App. C.

⁸ *House Journal*, Oct. 6, 1752. The House refused to consider the petition as it was addressed to the governor and the council and not to them.

last committee for a like service was appointed February, 1738/39, and that it did not report until thirteen months later.⁹ Gadsden stated that an inventory prepared by the previous committee had been found in the secretary's office and that it ought to be in the possession of the House, for it contained an account of all the acts passed prior to April 11, 1739, as well as all wills and testaments, inventories and appraisements as far as November 28, 1739, and likewise a description of all books of record in that office.¹⁰

That the physical facilities of the secretary's office were not always adequate is indicated by a memorial presented to the House by John Murray, acting secretary. In 1758 the secretary moved his office and records into the new State House. But he soon found that the office "was neither fitted up in so decent or commodious a manner as an office of such consequence ought to be, and as the reputation of the Province and the safety of the writings requires . . . there is not one press or closet for the records in the whole. And to supply that defect the old presses which besides being too small to contain the records bear no proportion to the rooms and are almost rotten are now made use of neither is the office provided with any chairs three old ones which were all the memorialist found in it being quite decayed the desks too are not very proper. . . ."¹¹ Upon investigation the legislative committee "observed divers papers & instruments of writing deposited on the window seats" and as a consequence recommended that another "press" be allowed. But as for chairs no further expense was considered necessary, as "few persons go to the Secretary's office to abide there a considerable time. . . ."¹²

However well kept the early colonial records were, certainly some of them were carried off by the British during the Revolution, al-

⁹ See the resolution providing for an accounting and inventory of the records in the secretary's office in *ibid.*, Apr. 5, 1739.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1765-1768, 76-78. A similar committee was appointed in 1736 to consider a "proper means to preserve the records in a better manner than has been hithertofores usually done." In 1768 the clerk of the House was ordered to make an index to such of the journals as had none. *Ibid.*, 1765-1768, 615. In the midst of the Revolution we find the clerks ordered to "open the Packages containing the Journals Books & other Papers belonging to this House and make out a Catalogue or Schedule thereof to remain in the Hands of the present Clerk with the Custody of the said Journals Books and other Papers." *Ibid.*, 1776, 220. In 1783 a legislative committee was appointed to examine journals and records contained in six boxes. Their report indicates that practically all the records found are now preserved in the office of the state historical commission. *Ibid.*, 1783, 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1758, 104-105.

¹² *Ibid.*, 107.

though most of them were saved by removal from Charleston.¹³ Those carried away have never been found, and their kind and number cannot be determined. Robert Lindsay, in a petition to the legislature (1783) asking to be relieved of the penalties of the confiscation acts, stated that he had signed two petitions to General Leslie, one to prevent negroes being taken away, and another to prevent records "being removed from this state."¹⁴ On May 6, 1783, Governor Ben Guerard commissioned George Readhead to go to New York and receive from Carleton or his agent "all the Artillery, Ordinance and Ordinance Stores, Public Records and Public property of what nature or kind soever belonging to and carried from this State to New York or elsewhere," and which the treaty of peace seemed to restore to the state.¹⁵ The success of Readhead's journey (if he made one) is not revealed.¹⁶ A recent secretary of state of South Carolina said that when Charleston was taken in 1780 the records were "carried to the woods . . . and concealed under piles of leaves, the marks of the water which reached them being still apparent."¹⁷ The water marks are apparent, but it is not certain that they were received at this time, for records of a later date have similar marks.

The fire which destroyed the State House in Charleston, 1788, did but little damage to the records, and on March 7, 1789, a law was enacted providing for the removal of all the public records from Charleston to Columbia, except such as related to property within the districts of Charleston, Georgetown, and Beaufort.¹⁸ Governor Charles Pinckney said that under this act it would be incumbent upon him to order the "Secretary of the State, the Commissioners of the Treasury, the Auditor General, & the Surveyor General with all the records of their respective offices . . . to be removed to Columbia—also to direct that the Courts of Chancery & of Sessions and Pleas be after that day held at Columbia . . . and that the records belonging to said courts . . . be removed there. . . ."¹⁹ However,

¹³ Salley, "Preservation of South Carolina History," in *N.C. Hist. Rev.*, IV, 147.

¹⁴ Petition found in upstairs annex of clerk of court's office, Charleston (1933).

¹⁵ Governor's Appointments and Commissions, Office of the historical commission.

¹⁶ The journals of the commissioners of the navy of South Carolina, which were retrieved by Mr. Salley from the New York archives in Albany after being almost destroyed by fire, and which were subsequently edited by Mr. Salley and published by the commission (Columbia, 1912-1913), were thought to have been carried away by the British.

¹⁷ Jesse T. Gantt, in *Columbia State*, Jan. 5, 1905.

¹⁸ *Stat. of S.C.*, V, 102-103.

¹⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1789, 172.

there was some difficulty with regard to the removal of the court records, for a few days after the act was passed a joint legislative committee reported that the courts of Chancery and of Sessions and Pleas for Charleston District were by law directed to be held in Charleston and could not be removed except by an express law for that purpose.²⁰ A later report from the commissioners for separating the records said, "This business will be attended with much expense and must take a considerable time to complete it." A legislative committee recommended in 1790 that the provision for "transcribing" the records be continued for one year, if necessary, and that the commissioners give notice in the gazettes of the number of plats missing from the surveyor-general's office, with dates and other information to enable persons affected by such loss to have their plats recorded.²¹

It does not appear that all the records were sent to Columbia. The commissioners reported, December, 1791, that the benefit of separating the records was "by no means adequate to the very great and unexpected expense," an expense which looked like an annual charge for many years. A recommendation was agreed to that the office be suspended and that copies of the records already made be sent to Columbia.²² The next year a committee reported that it had examined the copies deposited in the office of the secretary of state and found fifty-one volumes, all grants and plats.²³ Certain papers relating to the state treasury were removed from Columbia to Charleston. From this there resulted a "complete inventory" of all the treasury papers; the inventory "proved a difficult piece of business and took up a good deal of time," reported the committee, "as we found them [the papers] in great confusion which must have been owing to their frequent removal from one place to another."²⁴ From time to time other records were removed to Columbia. In 1820, for example, the comptroller-general was required to send to Columbia the index and check books and vouchers relating to soldiers' claims and land bounties.²⁵ Likewise records were transferred to Charleston. In 1827 the surveyor-general was directed to return to Charleston copies of plats and memorials and "other papers" then in the office in Columbia

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 254. Doubtless we see here the influence of the Charleston lawyers.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1790, 14.

²² *Ibid.*, 1791, 58, 65.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1792, 124.

²⁴ *House Journal*, 1791, 88.

²⁵ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1820, 78.

and belonging to the Charleston office.²⁶ In 1848 a special legislative committee was appointed to inquire into the propriety of removing from the secretary of state's office certain "wills and other papers, relating to the administration of Estates, which were filed in the said office, between the years 1784 and 1809, and of having the same deposited in the Ordinary's Office."²⁷

There is every indication that prior to 1865 the records were reasonably well kept, or at least there is plenty of evidence that they were not forgotten. In 1791, for example, when the county court system was suspended in Orangeburg and Beaufort districts, it was enacted that all records in such courts relative to the business of the ordinary be transferred to that official, and records relating to other judicial business were to be transferred to the clerk of the circuit court, and all other records transferred to the register of mesne conveyance for the district. Later when all county courts were abolished arrangements were made for the records to be removed to the district court in which the county was located.

We find the legislature giving orders for the safekeeping of records while a courthouse is being repaired; or commissioners appointed to superintend the recording of such papers as were not recorded at the death of the recording officer; or an appropriation to enlarge and fireproof an office for the district records; or for having certain books rebound. In 1801 a legislative committee found that the Court of Equity records in Charleston were in "a very ruinous state, and require immediate attention to place them in security and to render them accessible." An appropriation was made for the purpose.²⁸

Another committee found an urgent necessity for taking measures for the preservation of official records. "Some important records have already perished, or are rapidly going to destruction." They needed binding, copying, and placing in cases. Higher penalties were recommended for clerks of court, ordinaries, and registrars of mesne conveyances for neglecting to return duplicates, or abstracts, of records which were to be returned to the secretary of state's office. It was recommended that a committee be appointed to examine particularly

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1827, 67.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1848, 245. These papers evidently were returned to Charleston. Mr. A. S. Salley makes the point that this was fortunate since Columbia was swept by fire in 1865 and the state house burned. American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1913, 1, 272.

²⁸ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1801, 162-163; *Stat. of S.C.*, v, 429.

into the condition of the records in the office of the secretary of state, to determine which needed binding and copying, whether or not a general alphabetical index of miscellaneous records should be made, and whether there should not be built a suite of fireproof offices in Charleston and Columbia.²⁹ Two years later a similar report indicated that many original records were mutilated and fast becoming illegible that many others required repairs and indexes. Commissioners were appointed to make proper contracts and superintend the work. So much of the report of the commissioners "as contains a schedule of the records in the offices at Charleston and Columbia, should be printed for the use of the state. . . ."³⁰ When the commissioners found that many land plats prior to 1784 were so mutilated as to require copying to preserve the originals, an appropriation of about \$17,000 was made for the purpose.³¹ The next year \$800 was appropriated for making copies of the index books of indents.³² This same year \$25,000 was appropriated for a fireproof building in Charleston.³³ A resolution of 1822 instructed the secretary of state, the surveyor-general, "and all other recording officers within this state" to make out regular indexes of records in their offices. If they failed to do this, the governor was to appoint someone to do it at their expense.³⁴

In the forties much progress was made in arranging and indexing the legislative records of both houses, and special attention was paid to colonial and revolutionary records. This began with a resolution to set aside an apartment for the better disposition of the records of the legislature;³⁵ two years later the House resolved that its archives be arranged by years, "and in such form that they can be easily searched."³⁶ The records in the secretary of state's office did not fare so well, for the governor's message of 1843 referred to them in no uncertain terms: "A large portion of these records are in a wretched condition. Many have entirely gone to decay, and others are fast

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1817, 184-185.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1819, 84-85. I have not found this schedule.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1820, 89.

³² *Ibid.*, 1821, 70. There were other appropriations for similar purposes during this period. See *Stat. of S.C.*, VI, 114, 139-140, 154, 203.

³³ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1821, 271.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1822, 101. It may be noted also that the state soon gave financial aid in the publication of such documentary materials as found in Drayton's *Memoirs*, Carroll's *Historical Collections*, and Gibbs's *Documentary History*. Salley, "Preservation of South Carolina History," in *N.C. Hist. Rev.*, IV, 148-149.

³⁵ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1840, 98. For "furnishing cases and fitting up an apartment for the papers of both houses. . . ." \$500 was appropriated. *Stat. of S.C.*, XI, 110.

³⁶ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1842, 103-104.

mouldering away, while some important papers are altogether lost. These are the necessary consequences of a divided office, and an officer without a salary."³⁷ The governor was authorized to take measures for correcting this condition, but two years later there was no improvement. The older books were imperfectly executed, the paper old and rotten, and even the newly bound volumes could never be bound again because of the condition of the paper. The thing necessary, reported the committee, was a general index in the lexicographical form; there were no indexes to grant books in Columbia since 1822, and none to miscellaneous records since 1776.³⁸

The condition of the legislative records was considerably better. This was particularly true of the House records. A new clerk had taken office in 1839, and since that time all the papers were admirably arranged. "They are divided and classified with great regularity and method; with indexes and cross indexes." It was recommended that the clerk of the Senate do the same for the records in his charge. The next year a special committee reported that the records of the Senate had been examined, rearranged, classified, and deposited in packages, so endorsed as to facilitate search for any particular matter. The examination began with 1782, "which may indeed be regarded as the commencement of the continuous record of the Proceedings of the Legislature, or rather of the Senate Branch of it. Prior to that time, not only the papers, but even the Journals of its minutes are few and scattering, and in no wise connected."³⁹

In 1845 Thomas Frean and Robert Q. Pinckney were employed to copy and arrange certain state records, at an expense of several thousand dollars, and their work was completed satisfactorily.⁴⁰

With the year 1849 things began to move more rapidly. Governor Seabrook's message was accompanied by papers designed to "show that a rich mass of authentic materials . . . has been brought to light. The examination by a public-spirited citizen in the State offices; the discoveries in the archives of the Senate by the clerk of that body, and by the special agent of one of my predecessors" had produced this result. He recommended "that the Governor be authorized to appoint an agent to make in the first place, an index of the manuscripts on this subject in our State offices; to copy as many as are

³⁷ *Senate Journal*, 1843, 13.

³⁸ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1846, 209.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1847, 344-345; 1848, 220.

⁴⁰ *Stat. of S.C.*, XI, 381.

becoming illegible, or may be in a decayed condition; afterwards to visit London, Paris and Madrid, for the purpose . . . of a thorough inspection of the historical records, concerning the State, that are known to exist . . . and to select and transcribe such of them as are worthy of preservation."⁴¹ A memorial to the legislature from sundry citizens on the "collection and preservation of documents relating to the Colonial history of this State" indicated some public interest.⁴² The same year the clerk of the Senate made a report to Professor William J. Rivers on his findings, which was published in the *Reports and Resolutions*.⁴³ Under authorization from the legislature the governor employed John S. Green of Columbia to collect, arrange, and index all records preserved by the state and relating to the colonial and revolutionary periods.⁴⁴ He began work in July, 1850, and late that year had indexed and arranged the records from 1782 to 1789, or about one fifth of the work committed to him.⁴⁵ By 1851 he had completed an index to loose documents (1776-1790) found in the offices of the clerks of the House and Senate. This index is preserved but cannot be used, for the papers to which it refers are scattered.

It is not known how long Mr. Green was employed. At any rate secession and civil war put a stop to such activities, and Sherman's invasion of the state and the destruction of Columbia and other towns destroyed and scattered many valuable records. There was a good deal of confusion then and has been since about what happened to the archives when Sherman reached Columbia. In 1887 Justin

⁴¹ *Senate Journal*, 1849, 27.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴³ Some extracts: Journals and papers begin 1782. Original letters of Gen. N. Greene, and two letters from our senators in Congress of public interest; examinations made by committee appointed under the confiscation act; claims of the Prince of Luxembourg; resolutions of Georgia in relation to lands lying between the Tugaloo and Keowee Rivers. And for 1785, "The first of the papers, relating to a mysterious and interesting history, affecting the standing of a certain officer of South Carolina, appear in this year. The letters are from Gen'l. N. Greene, and are intensely interesting. I scarcely feel at liberty to put on paper my own conclusion in relation to this singular history, without a further examination of the documents. The despatches are numerous and interesting." Governor's message, in relation to pay of troops; accounts from commissioners of treasury; forfeited estates; account of auditor-general with Prince of Luxembourg; large number of messages and despatches from Governor Rutledge; the jury law; county courts; foreign trade; state constitution; exiled citizens; large number documents and despatches from governor; resolutions in regard Ancrum's, Sumter's, and Col. Peter Horry's negroes; Indian affairs. "There are also on file a large number of original letters from Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Green, Marion, Sumter, and others."

⁴⁴ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1849, 321.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1850, 221.

Winsor, in an address to the American Historical Association said, "it does not seem clear, from all the information which I can reach, that in the burning of Columbia, during Sherman's march, the archives were saved, though such was believed to be the case at the time. . . ."⁴⁶ The State House was destroyed,⁴⁷ along with its valuable library begun in 1800, and doubtless many valuable records too—just what we do not know. The great bulk of it was saved, however, for as Sherman's army approached the city the secretary of state, Wm. R. Hunt and Professor William J. Rivers managed to get ninety boxes ("some of them very large") into a freight car and they were removed to Charlotte, North Carolina. According to Mr. Hunt he "succeeded in packing up and removing every Record and every paper of value," not only of the offices of the secretary of state and the surveyor-general "but also of the Corresponding Offices located in Charleston which had previously [been] removed to Columbia & placed in his charge." After getting the records to Charlotte, where Mr. Hunt "remained with them in the midst of mud rain and cold, he being in very feeble health," they were returned to Chester as soon as a place for storing them could be found. Later when Governor McGrath selected Spartanburg for his headquarters part of the records were removed to that city, and from there to Greenville shortly after the war.⁴⁸ The report of the comptroller-general, dated November, 1865, is self-explanatory: "It is most gratifying to the Comptroller to be able to state that all of his official records, (35 boxes) and those of the two Treasuries, (38 boxes) have been saved, having been removed from Columbia before the Federal troops entered the city. With the exception of seven (7) boxes containing the ledgers, vouchers, &c., necessary for the present session these records, together with those of the Secretary of State and Surveyor-General, (70 boxes) and other officers of the State Government,

⁴⁶ American Historical Association, *Papers*, III, 19.

⁴⁷ This building had originated as part of a plan for caring for the records. In 1850 the legislature agreed that the proceeds from the sale of certain lots in Columbia should be placed at the disposal of a committee "for the purpose of erecting the basement story of a fire-proof building, for the deposit of the Records of the State. The Committee, after great deliberation, have determined to erect the said building as a part of a plan which might be used as a State House." Salley, "Preservation of South Carolina History," in *N.C. Hist. Rev.*, IV, 150.

⁴⁸ This information is found in Hunt's petition to the legislature for compensation for his property losses resulting from his absence from Columbia. This petition, together with the report on it by the committee of claims and grievances, was found among the state's records by one of the workers on the Historical Records Survey, Mrs. Louise J. Caughman, and it was kindly brought to my attention by Dr. Gregorie.

numbering in all nearly two hundred boxes, are now deposited in the Court House at Chesterville." An appropriation of \$300 was made to provide for their return to Columbia.⁴⁹ Upon their return the records were stored in a dozen different places, more or less forgotten for the next generation, and many of them, even to this day, are not usable.

The district or county offices also suffered more or less from the presence of the enemy. "The loss of the records in some instances is due to the negligence and delinquency of the officers in charge, while in other instances the destruction was committed by the Federal troops. . . ."⁵⁰ The committee on public buildings was instructed to report a plan whereby all public records of the various districts, which had been removed in order to escape the hands of the enemy, might be restored.⁵¹ Also there was some discussion as to what action, if any, the legislature should take "to cause the return to Charleston of such records of Charleston District as have not been destroyed."⁵² Perhaps the governors' records were destroyed,⁵³ and also those of the adjutant general. Mr. Salley states that the adjutant generals' records since about 1865 were destroyed during the World War by an army sergeant who wanted the boxes for shipping purposes. The courthouses with their records were destroyed in Orangeburg, Georgetown, Richland, Lexington, and Barnwell counties. In the latter place, deed books were preserved by hiding them in the woods. Also it is believed that the records of the Court of Appeals were destroyed in 1865. Some public papers were carried away from Columbia by unauthorized persons, and others were found in the streets after Sherman's departure.⁵⁴

Like other of the older states, South Carolina undertook to fill certain chasms in her records by obtaining copies from England. The legislature of 1827 resolved that it was desirable and expedient to procure copies of papers and documents, and the governor was re-

⁴⁹ *Reports and Resolutions*, Dec. Sess., 1865, 5, 187.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Reg. Sess., 1865, 148.

⁵¹ *House Journal*, Oct., 1865, 61.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵³ How great a loss this was we do not know. In 1842 Governor John P. Richardson lamented the fact that there was "scarcely a document or a record, or an archive in the department, to shed the light of a precedent, a decision, or even a tradition to enlighten the councils, or direct the policy, of succeeding administrations." *Senate Journal*, 1842, 29. The governors' correspondence prior to the Civil War seems to be nonexistent; the greater portion of that since 1865 is now with the historical commission.

⁵⁴ *Report of the Hist. Comm. of S.C.*, 1907, 10.

quested to take measures for procuring a list of such papers, also to ascertain whether it was practicable to obtain copies, and the probable cost.⁵⁵ Evidently an agent was appointed to go to England, for in 1830 Henry N. Cruger addressed a letter to the governor giving an account of what he had found.⁵⁶ This effort was not followed up, however, and in 1849 Professor Rivers called Governor Seabrook's attention to the work of the New England states in acquiring records to "substantiate and illustrate their history," one result of which had been the rise of "several distinguished historians at the North; and *the declaring to the world the history of the South* has thus fallen into the power of those who are not kindly disposed towards us."⁵⁷ In 1851 and again in 1854 the governor recommended the appointment of an agent to get copies from the English archives.⁵⁸

The South Carolina Historical Society, organized in 1855, proposed to "collect information respecting every portion of our State, to preserve it, and when deemed advisable to publish it." A library containing historical books and manuscripts was to be maintained. The following year the society was incorporated by the legislature, and the first volume of *Collections* appeared in 1857, through the aid of a state appropriation.⁵⁹ But the Southern nationalism that was giving rise to an increasing historical interest in all the Southern states was leading on to other events less propitious for immediate historical study.

The Reconstruction era may be passed over in silence so far as the archives are concerned. Nothing constructive was done. The records of a continuing nature, such as found in the office of the secretary of state, were kept up, and of course the legislative journals and laws were printed. Despite the lack of any systematic attention, many of the legislative records of the period were preserved; how

⁵⁵ *Reports and Resolutions*, 1827, 65.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1849, 455-456.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 457-458. Rivers wished to be appointed agent to visit England.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1851, 16; 1854, 19.

⁵⁹ *Collections of the South-Carolina Historical Society* (Charleston, 1857), I, v, vi, 10-11. This volume included "A List and Abstract of Documents Relating to South-Carolina, now existing in the State Paper Office, London. Prepared for the South-Carolina Historical Society, by an authorized agent, in London," 85-307. The list was continued in vol. II (1858), 118-326, and vol. III, 272-343. In 1856 Plowden C. J. Weston of South Carolina printed in London "for private Distribution only" an edition of 121 copies of *Documents Connected with the History of South Carolina*. He prefaced this with a statement addressed to the South Carolina Historical Society to the effect that until the society could publish collections "each separate member . . . must attempt to do, however, imperfectly, what the association has not as yet performed at all."

many of the current and older papers were destroyed or lost cannot be ascertained, but it is probable that such losses consisted mainly of loose papers.

Not until about 1890 was the undertaking to acquire English records revived by the appointment of a committee of the South Carolina Historical Society to (1) correspond with the secretary of state and secure a list of the records in his office, (2) correspond with Mr. W. Noel Sainsbury in regard to getting copies from the Public Record Office, and (3) secure estimates for the printing of the colonial records.⁶⁰ Shortly thereafter a public records commission was appointed by the governor to carry out this work. The task of making transcripts of the English records was immediately begun by Mr. Sainsbury; the thirty-six large folio volumes and an index volume of transcripts are now in the possession of the historical commission but unfortunately have not been printed.⁶¹ They contain materials relating to South Carolina from the Colonial Entry Book, Colonial Papers, Board of Trade, Board of Trade Proprietors, Board of Trade Journals, South Carolina Board of Trade, Plantations General, American and West Indies.⁶²

Out of the public records commission grew the South Carolina Historical Commission. In its report for 1894 the records commission recommended that a permanent historical commission be created. This was done under an act of December, 1894; in 1905 the commission was reorganized by an act which gave the commission very broad powers, and in the same year Mr. A. S. Salley, the present incumbent, was elected secretary. Since that time considerable prog-

⁶⁰ *Report of the Committee of the South Carolina Historical Society in the matter of procuring transcripts of the Colonial Records of this State from the London Record Offices*, Charleston, 1891. In 1883 the state appropriated money to aid in the publication of volume four of the society's *Collections* which appeared in 1887.

⁶¹ The part covering the period 1663-1697 has been published as *Records in British Public Record Office relating to South Carolina* (3 vols., 1930).

⁶² See *Report of the Public Records Commission* (Columbia, 1893). Mr. Sainsbury in making transcripts was to omit the following: Shaftesbury Papers, copied by the City Council of Charleston in 1883, and later edited by Langdon Cheves and issued as volume five of the *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society* (Charleston, 1897); papers relating to North and South Carolina in the North Carolina Colonial and State Records; and certain papers printed in the appendix to Rivers' work on the Provincial period. Mr. Sainsbury in writing to the secretary of state said, "You will find that of the thirteen States . . . South Carolina has the largest number of original records of any of them." See also Andrews, Charles M., "List of the Journals and Acts of the Councils and Assemblies of the Thirteen Original Colonies, and the Floridas, in America, Preserved in the Public Record Office, London." Ninth Report of the Public Archives Commission. Am. Hist. Assoc., *Ann. Rept.*, 1908, I, App. D. For South Carolina see 412-423.

ress has been made in editing and publishing the records, but a great deal remains to be done. The revolving fund established by the legislature has been too small to permit rapid publication.

Until recently the secretary of the historical commission occupied a small office, full to the ceiling, and too crowded for more than two or three people to work comfortably. There was not enough space to permit an orderly arrangement of the records, and as valuable records were found there was no place to put them. In 1935, however, the World War Memorial Building was completed and is in the custody of the historical commission. The commission occupies the first floor. New equipment has been provided, along with some additional help, and for the time being the space seems sufficient.

The extent and nature of these records cannot be adequately described here; further publications of the historical commission and the completion of the Historical Records Survey work will undoubtedly bring to light nearly all the official records.⁶³ It is thought, however, that a brief statement here concerning the more important records may not be amiss.

The important transcripts of documents in England, known as the Public Records of South Carolina, have been mentioned above. At the other extreme from the standpoint of usability are the many thousands of unsorted manuscripts ranging from about 1703 (?) to recent years. Until 1933 these records were simply piled on the floor of a basement storeroom in the State House and were without any semblance of order or shelves to hold them. Since then untrained workers have sorted them into bundles in more or less chronological order. A rough estimate gives around eight hundred cubic feet of such archives, the greater portion of which is unbound. There are approximately one thousand pasteboard letter file boxes of the correspondence of the governors since about 1865. While these papers are mainly of a legislative nature, they are so extremely miscellaneous that any further description would be misleading rather than useful.

Except for the early years, the legislative journals are relatively complete. There are some forty-six volumes of the journals of the Commons House of Assembly before the Revolution. Most of these

⁶³ The task of classifying and describing these records will be considerable. Many years ago Mr. Salley was asked to write a report on the archives. "I told Dr. Jameson," he says, "that it could not be done with any degree of accuracy. The fact is that I who am better acquainted with these records than anyone alive could not do justice to them—could not make a correct statement as to what is here."

are originals, some are copies, and in a few cases one finds both the original and a copy.⁶⁴ The earliest legislative record is the journal of the Grand Council, or upper house, beginning with the session of the Provincial Parliament commencing August 25, 1671. A legislative body was organized as early as March, 1670, but no journal of that date is found.⁶⁵ From this date until 1717 the records are very scant; from 1717 to 1741 there is a broken file; subsequent journals are complete through 1775. The Provincial Congress of South Carolina met March 26, 1776, and the journal of this body constitutes the first journal of the House of Representatives.⁶⁶ From that date to 1800 there is a fairly complete run; from 1800 through 1889 the manuscript journals are reported to be complete.⁶⁷ The Senate Journals are missing until the Jacksonborough session of January-February, 1782.⁶⁸ From that date to 1865 they are reported intact.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ See *Report of the Hist. Comm. of S.C.*, 1906; also "The Colonial Assemblies and their Legislative Journals," in 2nd Ann. Rept. of Hist. MSS Comm., Am. Hist. Assoc., *Ann. Rept.*, 1897, 442-449. The volumes for Oct. 28, 1765-April 26, 1766, April 28, 1766-June 28, 1766, and April 21, 1767-Mar. 2, 1768 were not included in the *Report* of 1906. Mr. A. S. Salley, secretary of the historical commission, has edited the earlier volumes, 1692-1703 (Columbia, v. d.). He has also edited the Journal of the General Assembly, Mar. 26, 1776-April 11, 1776; Sept. 17, 1776-Oct. 20, 1776 (Columbia, 1906, 1909).

⁶⁵ The volume commencing Aug. 25, 1671, has a note prefixed by John Green to the effect that the volume had been copied chiefly from an old book of miscellaneous records found in the ordinary's office in Charleston. "The original is without arrangement or connection and nearly illegible." The rest of the volume was copied from loose sheets of the Council journals found in the office of the secretary of state at Charleston. This volume was edited by A. S. Salley (Columbia, 1907).

⁶⁶ Called the General Assembly under the constitution of 1776, House of Representatives under the constitution of 1778.

⁶⁷ *Report of the Hist. Comm. of S.C.*, 1906. In my own investigation I did not find the manuscript journals for 1861-1866. There was no session in 1867. It appears that for some of the sessions during Reconstruction no manuscript copies of the journals were kept. After Reconstruction when John T. Sloan became clerk of the House, as he had been before the war, he had his daughter make manuscript copies of the printed journals where no manuscript existed. Since 1889 no manuscript copies have been kept.

⁶⁸ Called Legislative Council under the constitution of 1776, Senate under constitution of 1778.

⁶⁹ *Report of the Hist. Comm. of S.C.*, 1906; also Adelaide R. Hasse's "Materials for a Bibliography of the Public Archives of the Thirteen Original States," Am. Hist. Assoc., *Ann. Rept.*, 1906, II, part 2, 548. I found no manuscript journal from 1859 to Oct. 1865. Several volumes of "Executive Journals" of the Senate were found for the Reconstruction period. The journals of the House and Senate appear to have been published annually since 1831; there are no published journals extant prior to that date. However, in 1804 the House resolved that "in future the Journals of the House . . . shall be printed at the end of each session, together with the acts and resolutions which shall be passed during each session. . . ." The Senate concurred in all this resolution except the printing of the journals. *House Journal*, 1804, 80, 94, 187. In December, 1808, a Senate committee was instructed to contract for the publishing of extracts from

The Privy Council was created by the constitution of 1776 and abolished by that of 1790. "It was merely an advisory council to the Governor." Two volumes of its journals are extant. There are manuscript journals of the constitutional conventions of 1788, 1790, and the two "Conventions of the People," 1852.⁷⁰ The original engrossed copies of the constitutions of 1861, 1865, and 1868 are extant.

Important for the history of the Indian trade are the Journals of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, 1710-1718;⁷¹ letters and documents of the directors of the Cherokee Indian trade, 1762-1765; and letters and documents concerning Indian affairs, 1749-1760, in five folio volumes. There are some fifteen volumes of "Memorial Books" containing abstracts of property titles, land grants as well as many plats, and covering the period from 1732 to 1778.⁷² There are

the journals of Senate in the "same manner that the journals of the House of Representatives are." *Acts and Resolutions*, 1808, 95. In 1821 the House wished to appropriate money for printing the laws passed at that session, "together with the Journals of both houses," as well as all incidental printing of the Senate. The contract was to go to Daniel Faust at \$1,150. Another printer, William Cline, was to "print the Journals of both houses and all the bills, orders, and incidental printing" of the House. Again the Senate refused to concur. See *Reports and Resolutions*, 1821, 72, also *Senate Journal*, 1821, 53-67. The *Reports and Resolutions* were printed as early as 1791. There is a copy in the Charleston Library. Bowker, *State Publications*, 781, gives earliest published *Reports and Resolutions* as 1795. In 1793 the assembly was authorizing Timothy and Mason, Charleston printers, to print "all the Laws, Resolutions, Proclamations, and public advertisements, and all Business of a public nature to be printed by either Branch of the legislature, or the Governor" at £100 per annum. *House Journal*, 1793, 573. Prior to the publication of the *Journals*, the governor's messages and communications to the assembly are found in the manuscript journals. There is no official list of the state's publications. See R. R. Bowker, *State Publications. A Provisional List of the Official Publications of the Several States of the United States from their Organization* (New York, 1908); 781-804 relate to South Carolina. Since 1909 the Library of Congress has issued a monthly checklist of state publications. See also Adelaide R. Hasse, "Materials for a Bibliography of the Public Archives of the Thirteen Original States covering the colonial period and the state period to 1789." In *Am. Hist. Assoc., Ann. Rept.*, 1906, II, part 2, 532-550.

⁷⁰ The proceedings of the Provincial Congress which adopted the constitution of 1776 may be found in the journal of that body, Mar. 26-April 11, 1776. There is no journal of the proceedings of the constitutional convention of 1778. The only journal of the convention of 1790 is the recently discovered "foul" journal in the possession of the historical commission. The journal of the convention of September, 1865, was published (Columbia, 1865); and a stenographic report of the proceedings of the convention of 1868 was published (Charleston, 1868). The journal of the convention of 1895 was published (Columbia, 1895).

⁷¹ The volume containing the journal for Sept. 20, 1710-April 12, 1715 was edited by A. S. Salley (Columbia, 1926).

⁷² In regard to land grants, Governor William Bull was writing to the Lords Commissioners, Sept. 8, 1765, "I called upon the Secretary to hasten the List of Grants which your Lordships were pleased to direct; He employes one Clerk almost constantly upon that work, and it is got down now as far as the Grants in 1736. I think it my duty to observe to your Lordships that the Record Book of Grants prior to the year 1692 was

twenty folio volumes of marriage settlements, 1785-1902, with one index volume to the first sixteen volumes.⁷³

Although the preservation and printing of the public laws of the colony was a thing of first importance, it was not attended to properly. When Thomas Cooper was compiling the *Statutes at Large* (1836), he found that no original manuscript acts were to be found from 1687 to 1690.⁷⁴ In 1712 Chief Justice Nicholas Trott was authorized to make a collection of the laws,⁷⁵ but this was not printed until 1736. In that year Peter Timothy began to print the acts, but they were not collected systematically. As late as 1761 Lieutenant-Governor William Bull was compelled to advertise in the gazettes for copies of the printed laws so that he might have a complete set to send to England. He mentioned that few more copies were printed than were subscribed for and that, as there were no bookbinders in Charleston, very few complete copies were to be had.⁷⁶ In 1767 the Commons House, because of some difficulties arising out of the Stamp Act, successfully sought the suspension of Chief Justice Charles Shinner. To the charge that he was ignorant of the law he made the defense that few of the acts had been printed and that the majority were not to be had at all. The reply of the House was that since the publication of Trott's laws the acts "are written by the Clerk of the the Assembly as passed in a Book kept for that purpose, also by the Clerk of the Council, the Original lodged in the Secretary's Offices,

burnt among other Records about that time so that the List will not be perfect from the first settlement of the Province." Pub. Rec. of S.C., xxx, 271. Mr. Salley remarks that Bull's statement may be correct, but that many land grants are found in the Register of the Province, especially the one for 1675-1695.

⁷³ "The Marriage Settlements recorded in this Book from the first page to page one hundred and ninety two were brought into the Secretarys office in consequence of an Act of Legislature passed the eighth day of March 1785 entitled 'an Act to oblige Persons interested in Marriage Deeds and contracts to record the same in the Secretarys office of this State on or before the first of September 1785' and were received within that date." Peter Freneau, deputy secretary, in Marriage Settlements, 1, 1785-1792, note on first page. Mr. Salley states that before 1785 marriage settlements were recorded only in the district. On Mar. 16, 1695/96 it was enacted that in the future every man married should register his marriage in the register's office on penalty of "one royall." Births and burials were to be registered also. This law was to continue for two years only, but it was later revived. *Stat. of S.C.*, II, 120-121.

⁷⁴ *Stat. at Large*, II, 38 n. See also the prefatory "advertisement" to this volume.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 602.

⁷⁶ Bull to Lords of Trade, Feb. 17, 1761. Within three months Bull did send a complete set to England. Pub. Rec. of S.C., xxix, 40-41, 98. In 1770 Bull wrote to Hillsborough that a few years before he had prevailed upon Assistant Justice William Simpson (appointed Feb. 27, 1760) to make a digest of the laws which "tho' imperfect, has been of great use. . . ." *Ibid.*, xxxii, 382-383. The implication is that this was printed, but I have found no evidence to that effect.

Copies are also printed at the Public expence every year, and two for the use of the members of the Council and Assembly. . . ." Several times the assembly had "advertised for persons willing to undertake the Compiling them, to give in proposals for so doing, but Persons have either been unfit for the work or Immoderate in their Demands."⁷⁷

It was this situation, however, that probably prompted the assembly to authorize John Rutledge in 1768 to make a compilation of the laws.⁷⁸ This compilation appears to have been made but never printed.⁷⁹

In 1785, the assembly, recognizing that "the laws have not only multiplied to a great and unnecessary degree, but have also run into obscurity and confusion," provided for the appointment of three commissioners who were to form "a complete and accurate digest of the statute laws of this State, with such additions, alterations and amendments" as were necessary. In effect, this was to be a code, but when it was presented to the legislature in 1789 it was not adopted.⁸⁰ In 1790 Judge John F. Grimké, one of the above commissioners, published a digest of the laws then in force; but he exercised so much latitude in excluding and altering that Joseph Brevard found reason to publish, in 1814, another digest in three volumes. The first two volumes contained the "English statutes and acts of assembly of a *general permanent nature*," and the third "all the acts . . . now of force, not contained in the two first volumes, being of a *less general* and permanent nature. . . ." Superseding all these were the *Statutes*

⁷⁷ Garth Correspondence, 44. MS, office of Hist. Comm. of S.C.

⁷⁸ An appropriation of £700 was made for compiling and printing. *House Journal*, xxxvii, 690, 692, 694-695.

⁷⁹ July 19, 1768, Bull wrote to Hillsborough that the work was being diligently carried on by a gentleman of the law and would be published "next winter." Pub. Rec. of S.C., xxxii, 19. In 1775 a committee of the Assembly was appointed to examine Rutledge's compilation and print it if it were approved. *House Journal*, 1775, 271-272. On Mar. 2, 1784, the House was discussing the necessity of a digest of the laws, agreeable to the resolution of Feb. 14, 1777, and it was resolved that application be made to Rutledge for his compilation. When it was put to press he was to be paid the sum specified in the resolution of April 12, 1768. *House Journal*, 1784, 208. Joseph Brevard in the introduction to his *Digest* (1814) mentions (I, ix) "a manuscript collection of acts of assembly, in two volumes, by the late Hugh Rutledge," a brother of John Rutledge. Possibly this was the John Rutledge compilation.

⁸⁰ *Stat. at Large*, iv, 659-660. The three commissioners were Justices Henry Pendleton, Aedanus Burke, and John F. Grimké. Pendleton died in 1788. Burke, in presenting the code, mentioned that the laws were "mingled in a confused chaos, under a stupendous pile of old and new law rubbish, past all possibility of being known, only to the law professors." It is not known why the code was not adopted; some of its provisions were incorporated into the constitution of 1790. Brevard, *Digest*, I, xvii.

at Large begun by Thomas Cooper in 1836 and continued by D. J. McCord.

It should be repeated, in conclusion, that this sketch of the public records of South Carolina is by no means exhaustive. The Historical Records Survey, when completed, will give a more complete and accurate description, or inventory, of the records than is possible here.⁸¹

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⁸¹ For all practical purposes many of the records in Charleston archives prior to about 1783 should be state records. Among these may be mentioned the records in the office of the clerk of the county court: renunciation of dower and inheritance records, 1726-1792 (the following dates are inclusive and do not show the existing gaps); records of the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions, 1734-1771; judgment rolls, 1750-1773; minutes of the Court of Chancery, 1721-1794; and a large quantity of miscellaneous court records extending back to 1704 at least. The records in the Probate Court fall into four groups: miscellaneous, including wills, inventories, powers of attorney, guardianship papers, etc., 1687-1789; letters of administration, 1778-1786; inventories of estates, 1732-1800; wills, 1671-1793. In the Mesne Conveyance Office the records of the deeds and real estate transfers begin with 1719 and continue without a break. Some of the earlier records are very miscellaneous. In the office of the clerk of the United States District Court are three thick folio volumes containing a record of the proceedings of the court of vice-admiralty of South Carolina, Nov. 13, 1716, to May 14, 1763. The Library of Congress has a photostat of this. The library of the South Carolina Historical Society has a volume of the proceedings of the Court of Ordinary, 1764-1771. The Charleston Library Society has one volume of marriage bonds, 1743-1744.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Aktenkunde: Ein Handbuch für Archivbenutzer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Brandenburg-Preussens, von Heinrich Otto Meisner, Staatsarchivrat, Reichsarchiv, Potsdam. (Berlin. E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1935. Pp. xix, 186. M. 10.)

For a decade the author of this volume has been concerned with aids to research in modern archives, especially as an instructor in the training school for archivists at the *Preussisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv*, since 1930 the *Institut für Archivwissenschaft und geschichtswissenschaftliche Fortbildung*. With this experience, in addition to that of a *Staatsarchivrat* at the *Reichsarchiv* in Potsdam, Dr. Meisner is well qualified for the task he has undertaken. That task is to attempt to do for public records of the last several centuries what diplomatics embraces for records of earlier centuries.

At one time the author suggested to this reviewer that modern diplomatics might be a fair translation of *Aktenkunde*. It is evident that such a translation begs the question. To describe the work as a study of modern documents, while it is not a precise translation, has the distinct advantage of withholding a possible contribution to the frequently protracted terminological disputes of some of our abler colleagues.

Having defined the scope of his work in a short introductory chapter, the author clears the air with an explanation of Prussian archival terminology. The remaining three chapters are given over to a systematic and concrete study of the customary forms of modern documents, an analysis of their internal and external characteristics and an excellent genetical study of the origin, use, and storing of archives (1) in the office of origin; (2) in the registry; and (3) in the archival depository.

The exposition is limited to the *fait accompli*. The reader is not distracted by musings on what might have been, or what could be in the future. For archivists, teachers of historiography, historians, and other searchers particularly interested in German, and specifically Prussian archives, the work fills a considerable need. To American archivists, the exposition of official German practices in archives administration, as contained in particularly the last chapter, and the fact that the way is pointed for a similar project in the study of American official documents are most interesting.

Lacking as we do the salutary effects of intelligent centralized control and responsibility for accumulating official documents, achieved in Prussia by the traditional and effective *Registraturen*, our archivists and historians are confronted with sprawling record masses to which there is no satisfactory introduction. While discussing the problem of destruction of records, Dr. Newsome has referred to Mr. Jenkinson's proposal of the administrator, acting through his central registry, as the sole agent for the selection and destruction of public archives. Dr. Newsome objects, with good reason, to our type of ad-

ministrator alone assuming such an important duty and points out that conditions in American state and local government "raise serious doubts as to the practicability and wisdom of the system of central register for state and local archives in the United States."¹ This may be understood to assume that such a policy of selection and destruction of records by the administrator is an integral part of the registry system and therefore the latter is inapplicable in the United States, which is not the case. The registry, essentially, provides a centralized control over and custody of the current or semicurrent official records of the whole or a major part of a single administration or bureau. It differs from our average central files principally in degree of control and extent of custody over records of the agency maintaining it. It does combine some of the functions of our mail sections with those of our central files.

It is true that the registry may be used to simplify a program for the destruction of records. Likewise, as in Prussia, it may so centralize, arrange, and prepare inventories of modern records that similar work to be done later by the archivist is greatly facilitated. But these are incidents of such a system and not at all of its essence. Dr. Meisner described the *Registratur* or registration process as it exists in Prussia so as to include (1) the individual memorandum of all documents internal to an agency of the government; (2) the recording or compilation of an inventory of the documents in the *Registratur*; (3) the recording of outgoing papers (outgoing register); (4) the permanent documents, so recorded, of the whole or a part of an agency (Registry A, B, C of Bureau X); (5) the place for keeping registered documents; (6) the officers assigned for the maintenance, arrangement, and administration of such documents.

What a single file is to an office, all records of an agency are to a registry, and theoretically at least all records of all agencies are to a central archives. Each of these three authorities has a logically defined jurisdiction, the registry being the responsible and recognized authority for good housekeeping as far as the records of a line agency are concerned.

Since our public archives present few linguistic and no palaeographical obstacles to research, our handicaps to effective use of records are rather the inavailability of much of our public archives, the modicum of heuristic thereto, and the total absence of such a specialized aid to the study thereof as Dr. Meisner has prepared for the archives of Brandenburg and Prussia. That the study is fragmentary the author is the first to admit. Nevertheless, it is published with a reasonable expectation that the discussion it may call forth will lead to a better approximation of "modern diplomatics." Its significance lies in its disciplined and timely conception.

EMMETT J. LEAHY

The National Archives

¹ "Uniform State Archival Legislation," *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*, II (1939), 14.

SHORTER NOTICES

The publication, *Survey of Local Finance in Illinois*. Volume I. *Atlas of Taxing Units* (Chicago, 1939), prepared under the auspices of the Illinois Tax Commission and the WPA, provides an example of the contribution auxiliary scholarship may make to a specialized study of a type that requires a high degree of skill.

The series of which the *Atlas* is the first volume is a comprehensive study of the fiscal problems of local government over a ten-year period. The period 1925-1935 was chosen with a view to determine the correlation of local governmental finance and economic conditions. The *Atlas* provides maps which show the areas and periods of settlement, the development and delineation of counties, the location of local governmental units in 1938, the extension of the township form of government, market and distribution centers, and the location of fire protection, mosquito abatement, public health, sanitary, and tuberculosis sanitarium districts. A chart graphically demonstrates the overlapping of taxing units and aggregate rate areas of Lake County as a sample of the tax structure in a single county. Tables summarize the tax units in Illinois and the United States, the growth of the population since territorial times, and statistics relative to taxing units.

Although the objective of the survey was not to audit local financial records, the letter transmitting the report to the governor states that the examination of the records has resulted in improved recording methods and increased adherence to statutory provisions. The critical examination and use of the records, as was the case in this survey, proved to be a valuable test of the present and future worth of contemporary materials of an archival nature.

The *Inventories* of Adams, Jackson, Morgan, and Sangamon counties, Illinois, have been released by the Historical Records Survey during the past months. These volumes, each of which comprises more than two hundred mimeographed pages, conform to the standards of appearance and form of the previously issued volumes. The prefaces to the Adams, Jackson, and Sangamon county inventories state that the survey plans to publish separate histories of these counties as supplements to the inventories. These histories are to be based on the county records and other sources and will be fully documented.

NEWS NOTES

PROGRAM FOR THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

OF

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

October 13 and 14, 1939

Friday, October 13

10:00 A.M. Session—Ballroom, Carvel Hall

THE EDITING AND PUBLICATION OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Chairman: Solon J. Buck, The National Archives

1. Publication Policies for Archival and Historical Agencies

C. C. Crittenden, North Carolina Historical Commission

2. St. Columba, Peter Force, and Robert C. Binkley; The Lesson They Teach

Julian P. Boyd, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Discussion Leader: Clarence E. Carter, U. S. Department of State

12:30 P.M. Luncheon Conference—Officers' Club, United States Naval Academy

Presiding: A. R. Newsome, President of the Society

Addresses of Welcome:

1. For the Hall of Records Commission

Chief Judge Carroll T. Bond, Maryland Court of Appeals

2. For the State of Maryland

Governor Herbert R. O'Connor

2:30 P.M. Session—Ballroom, Carvel Hall

STATE AND LOCAL ARCHIVES

Chairman: Theodore C. Pease, Editor, THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST

1. State Archives

William D. McCain, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

2. Local Archives

Lewis G. VanderVelde, University of Michigan

3. The Historical Records Survey: An Outside View
William R. Hogan, Louisiana State University

- 7:00 P.M. Annual Dinner—Mirror Room, Carvel Hall
Presiding: George H. Ryden, Delaware Public Archives
Commission
Presidential Address: The Archivist in American Scholarship
A. R. Newsome, University of North Carolina
- 9:00 P.M. Business Meeting—Mirror Room, Carvel Hall

Saturday, October 14

- 10:00 A.M. Session—Ballroom, Carvel Hall

PROBLEMS IN ARCHIVAL ADMINISTRATION

Chairman: Luther H. Evans, The Historical Records Survey

1. Aspects of European Archival Administration, 1939
Emmett J. Leahy, The National Archives
2. A Study of Müller, Feith, and Fruin's Manual in Relation to Current Archival Problems
Arthur H. Leavitt, The National Archives
3. Specifying Inks and Papers for Government Offices
Harold S. Burt, Connecticut State Library

- 12:30 P.M. Luncheon Conference—Mirror Room, Carvel Hall
Presiding: W. Stull Holt, Johns Hopkins University
1. Finding, Preserving, and Using Business Records
Herbert Heaton, Princeton University

- 2:30 P.M. Session—Ballroom, Carvel Hall

MAPS AS ARCHIVAL RECORDS

Presiding: Fred W. Shipman, The National Archives

1. The Special Problem of Map Administration
Lloyd A. Brown, William L. Clements Library
2. The Historian as a User of Archival Maps
Samuel F. Bemis, Yale University
3. The Use of Maps in Boundary Problems
S. W. Boggs, U. S. Department of State
4. Archival Maps as Illustrated by Those in the National Archives
W. L. G. Joerg

7:00 P.M. Dinner Session—Mirror Room, Carvel Hall

Presiding: Frank Stringfellow Barr, St. Johns College

1. Remarks from the New President of the Society
2. What the Research Scholar Expects of an Archival Establishment

James F. Kenney, Public Archives of Canada

3. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park
R. D. W. Conner, The National Archives

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The archivist of the United States announces the appointment of Ralph G. Lounsbury, formerly assistant professor of history at New York University, as a consultant in Latin-American affairs in the Division of Reference. Raemey A. Burton recently resigned his position in the Division of Labor Department Archives to become district manager for the Railroad Retirement Board in Columbus, Ohio. Emmett J. Leahy has returned to duty in the Division of Treasury Department Archives from a world tour during which he visited eighteen archival agencies, most of them on the European continent.

The National Archives has recently issued in processed form the following Staff Information Circulars: (1) "Archival Training in Prussia," a translation of a lecture by the German archivist Albert Brackmann, which appeared in the *Archivalische Zeitschrift* in 1931; (2) "Report on a Scientific Mission to German, Austrian, and Swiss Archives," a translation of the official report of the Belgian archivist Joseph Cuvelier, which appeared in *Les Archives de l'Etat en Belgique* in 1914; (3) "Answers to Some Questions Most Frequently Asked About the National Archives"; (4) "Repair and Preservation in the National Archives," by Arthur E. Kimberly; and (5) "European Archival Practices in Arranging Records," by Theodore R. Schellenberg. The history and functions of the National Archives are discussed by Solon J. Buck in an article entitled "Das Nationalarchiv der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika," which appeared in the *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 45:16-33 (1939).

Records from more than thirty diplomatic and one hundred fifty consular posts in Europe, Latin America, the Indian Ocean area, and various other parts of the world have been received in pursuance of a four-year program, begun in 1938, under which the records of all such posts to August 15, 1912, are to be transferred to the National Archives. These records contain information supplementary to that appearing in the records of the State Department in Washington. Use of any of these records post-dating August 14, 1906, is restricted. Other accessions recently received by the National Archives include papers filed in cases brought before the Court of Claims, 1855-1923;

War Department accounting records, 1800-1925; organizations strength returns of the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917-1920; correspondence and related papers concerning the location, construction, maintenance, and repair of public buildings, 1837-1933; records of the Potomac Company and its successor, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, 1785-1900; some seventeen thousand maps constituting the bulk of the collection created and used by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1830-1937; documents concerning Spanish and Mexican land grants in California, 1780-1846, which were formerly in the Public Survey Office at Glendale, California; correspondence and other records of the Bureau of Chemistry and of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, 1907-1929; correspondence of the Lighthouse Board and of its successor, the Bureau of Lighthouses, 1901-1925; and records of the Merchant Fleet Corporation concerned chiefly with the operation of vessels, 1917-1933.

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd has presented to the National Archives about 380,000 feet of motion-picture film portraying rather fully his two Antarctic expeditions and less extensively his North Pole and transatlantic flights.

THE HISTORICAL RECORDS SURVEY

The Historical Records Survey projects of the WPA, formerly operated under exclusively federal sponsorship, will now be carried on under local sponsorship at approximately the same levels of employment and operation, according to a recent announcement of Florence S. Kerr, assistant commissioner in charge of the Professional and Service Division of the Work Projects Administration. Under the national direction of Dr. Luther H. Evans, these projects, in the past, have rendered valuable services in connection with the nation's archives. Their continuation under local sponsorship, a stipulation of the current WPA appropriations act, has been made possible by the large number of interested public agencies which have come forward as sponsors.

To date, applications for continuing Historical Records Survey projects have been received at the national WPA office from forty-seven states, New York City, and the District of Columbia. The majority of these projects, of which the sponsors' contribution averages slightly more than thirteen per cent, have been approved for operation.

The current WPA appropriations act stipulates that Historical Records Survey projects along with art, music, and writers projects must all be sponsored locally after September 1, 1939. This provision places these projects—all part of the WPA arts program—on the same basis as other WPA projects which require the sponsors to contribute a part of the cost. Prior to the current act, the Historical Records Survey, as were the other arts projects, was paid for entirely from federal funds and was entirely directed from Washington. The Federal Theater Project, one of the original units of the WPA arts program, was eliminated by a provision of the current appropriations act.

Formerly there had been 186 state-wide programs for art, music, writers, and historical records survey projects under exclusive federal sponsorship, the arts program announcement revealed. Applications are now on hand at WPA headquarters for 173 such projects under local sponsorship. All state programs except those for Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, and the District of Columbia have received final approval. In each of the three states named and in the District of Columbia parts of such a program have been approved and other applications are pending.

Most of the applications on file call for the operation of all four of the units now comprising the WPA arts program—art, music, writers, and historical records survey. Applications for art projects have been received from 42 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia; for music projects from 38 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia; for writers projects from 46 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia, and for historical records survey projects from 47 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia.

On the basis of the applications already received, the total estimated monthly cost of the projects comprising the WPA arts program will be \$3,357,000. At least 13 per cent of this cost will be contributed by sponsors. It is estimated that an average monthly employment of 34,500 persons will be needed on these projects. This, however, is a maximum figure not likely to be reached while general reductions are in force on project rolls. Employment on the arts program is subject to the same fluctuations that affect other types of projects. Actual employment on such projects during the week ending August 16, 1939, was 21,873.

All of the arts program projects are set up on a state-wide basis, usually with one principal sponsor, although in some instances co-sponsors assist with the development of the projects within individual communities. A wide variety of public agencies has come forward as sponsors, including state universities, departments of public welfare, library and archive boards, art commissions, departments of public education, and similar agencies. Sponsors' contributions may consist of cash or equivalents in supervision, material, facilities and quarters.

NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina Historical Commission has completed the installation of the stacks in one half of its new archives, affording better facilities than the commission has previously had. It is hoped that sufficient funds will soon be available to install stacks in the other half.

HAWAII

The "Report of the Librarian of the Board of Commissioners of Public Archives for the Year Ending June 30, 1939" states that more patrons were served during this the thirty-third year than in any previous year. Close to five

thousand persons are reported to have used the institution's facilities. An extensive program of translating documents in the Hawaiian and Chinese languages into English is being carried on.

NORWAY

Mr. Harold Larson, the National Archives, contributed this notice of Norwegian archival activity:

May 9, 1939, the archivist of Norway, Dr. Asgaut Steinnes, arrived in New York for his first visit to the United States. His aim was to become acquainted with American archival establishments and, in particular, to inspect the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. Norway is planning a new building to house its national archives, to be erected in Oslo near the university library. During this coming fall Norwegian architects will enter into a nation-wide competition and in the following summer it is hoped that construction will begin in accordance with the plan that has finally been adopted. The building will cost from two to two and one half million Norwegian *kroner* or from six to seven hundred thousand dollars in American money. "Of course," said Dr. Steinnes, "we have read much of the new imposing archives building in Washington. But it is another matter to see what has actually been done, to examine the building and the equipment and to observe the methods of operation." For one week Dr. Steinnes made a careful study of the National Archives, where he was shown every possible courtesy by the archivist of the United States, by the executive officer, by the administrative secretary, by the director and the assistant director of archival service, by the director of publications and by various other officials too numerous to mention. Dr. Steinnes paid special attention to the original plans of the archives building and was interested in every detail of its construction as explained by the executive officer and by the chief of the Buildings and Grounds Section. Escorted by the archivist, he made a tour of the stack areas, the equipment of which he inspected long and carefully. While in Washington he looked into the new annex to the Library of Congress and he also visited the Hall of Records at Annapolis, Maryland.

Actually, indicated Dr. Steinnes, the need of a new building for the national archives is an old story in Norway. The beginnings of a central Norwegian archival establishment can be traced back to about the year 1300 in the depository at the old fortress of Akershus. The national records remained at Akershus until 1866, when they were moved to the building occupied by the Norwegian *Storting* (parliament). But the legislators needed more and more the space allotted to the records and the latter were therefore moved in 1914 to their present quarters, a structure formerly used by the Bank of Norway. The Norwegian parliament, however, retained its own records as a special collection. Despite an addition, this old bank building soon proved

inadequate and Dr. Steinnes has estimated that he could well utilize five times the amount of space available at present.

The oldest item in the Norwegian national archives is in Latin, a papal letter from the year 1189. From around 1200 A.D. come the earliest manuscripts in Old Norse, chiefly parchments now considered priceless but once so little regarded that tax collectors used them to bind up their reports to the Danish exchequer in the days when Norway was ruled from Copenhagen. A significant feature of Norwegian archival history has been the repatriation of records lodged in foreign collections, especially in Copenhagen. After the separation of Norway from Denmark in 1814 began the long process of recovering from the Danes the material that belonged, strictly speaking, to Norway and for which in several instances the Norwegians still possessed the original loan receipts. During the years 1820-1822, 1851, and lastly in 1937, the Norwegian records slowly drifted back to their old home.¹ But much negotiation was necessary, for the Danish government proved not as generous as was the Bavarian king who in 1830 relinquished without question several thousand Norwegian documents that had been found in his kingdom.²

The year 1814 forms a convenient dividing point in the national archives of Norway. Papers prior to that date are used mostly for historical research. Relatively little is available beyond the year 1850, which year was the terminal date in the last great accession, which took place in the eighties. However, there are some records dating from as recently as 1910 and it is hoped that everything to 1914 can be included in the new building. Dr. Steinnes has in his custody a number of older Norwegian business records. These he considers valuable for economic history, a field in which he himself has made notable contributions to Norwegian learned journals. The archivist of Norway is also enabled to receive private papers but prefers especially those of statesmen such as the great Liberal leader, Johan Sverdrup, from whom originate ten cases of documents. Papers of literary men, however, generally fall to the university library in Oslo, which has excellent Bjørnson and Ibsen collections.

The principle of *provenance* is, of course, adhered to, and the archival system strongly resembles that of Denmark. Each government department in Norway has its own archives and it is the belief of Dr. Steinnes that in both the department and the national archives the same filing system should be employed. At present the central archives in Oslo has no card catalogue and no recent guide has been published because not all the material has been classified. For collections stemming from temporary agencies developed in a time of crisis—Norway had them also during the World War—Dr. Steinnes

¹ See H. Koht, *Det gamle norske Riksarkiv og restene fra det* (Oslo, 1927); and the popular treatment of Chr. Brinchmann, *Norges arkivsaker i Danmark* (Oslo, 1927).

² O. J. Falnes, *National Romanticism in Norway* (New York, 1933), 94-95, 151 *et seq.*

thinks a separate guide may well be produced but that for other groups of records a card catalogue would seem preferable. The Norwegian archives does not receive motion-picture film. It has its own special library of some twenty-five thousand volumes and it does its own bookbinding. The publication program is modest, being one volume annually of about three hundred pages. Dr. Steinnes is now working on Norwegian historical source material from the sixteenth century and is a member of the Norwegian Council for publishing such sources (*Kjeldeskriftraadet*). Dr. Steinnes does not publish his annual report, for he fears, modestly, that if he did, it would of necessity be repetitious.

Among the predecessors of Dr. Steinnes as *Riksarkivar* are numbered several of Norway's most distinguished men. The poet, Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845) spent the closing years of his hectic life in this position.³ Wergeland's successor, Christian C. A. Lange (1810-1861) was an assiduous collector of documents both at home and abroad. Lange also was instrumental in beginning the comprehensive *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, a sort of *Monumenta* of Norse medieval documents, which is still in progress. Lange was followed by the brilliant historian, P. A. Munch (1810-1863), who received the appointment in part to repair his shattered finances, because as he once complained, he must have been born wholly without "economic talent."⁴ It was Munch who got access to the papal archives in Rome and made known its treasures to the Scandinavian North. He died unexpectedly in Rome and was buried there in the Protestant cemetery, the historian Gregorovius bringing at his grave the tribute of European scholarship. Next may be mentioned Michael Birkeland (1830-1896), the greatest, Dr. Steinnes believes, of Norwegian archivists and assuredly so in point of service, for he was first employed in the Norwegian archives in 1856 and was *Riksarkivar* from 1875 to 1896.⁵ He personally supervised the removal of the archives in 1866 from Akershus to the building of the Norwegian parliament. In 1869 he took the initiative in the founding of the Norwegian Historical Society. Extremely conservative, Birkeland did more as a researcher in and collector of source material than as a productive author.⁶ Under him the Norwegian national archives became essentially an independent institution, although then as now under the Department for Ecclesiastical Affairs.

The present *Riksarkivar*, Dr. Asgaut Steinnes, after having taught in various schools, took the doctorate at the University of Oslo in 1928 and in the same year was appointed University Fellow in history. He has been archivist of Norway since 1933. His professional staff numbers around fifty and includes

³ One may note as does Falnes, *op. cit.*, 85, Wergeland's "picture of the self-denying archivist wallowing in dust and documents, uncomplaining and content thus to serve the honor of his country."

⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁵ See Fr. Ording, *Det Laerde Holland* (Oslo, 1927), 117 *et seq.*, *passim*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

two women, both employed at Oslo, the one as a librarian, the other as an archivist. As the head of the Norwegian archival system he administers the central archives (*Riksarkiv*) in Oslo and the five separate "state" archives in the cities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Kristiansand, and Hamar. The term "state" archives, he admits, is misleading, since these contain records of the local authorities. As potential archivists Dr. Steinnes prefers students of history or of law; the latter are hard to get since the best ones prefer to practice. Genealogists are frequent callers and are assisted to a limited degree. But for extended searches they must do the work themselves or employ an assistant.

From Washington Dr. Steinnes planned to travel to Springfield, Illinois, to see the new building recently erected there for use as the archives building of the state of Illinois. After a short visit to California he will return to Norway.

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It has been necessary to omit the abstracts of European archive publications.
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